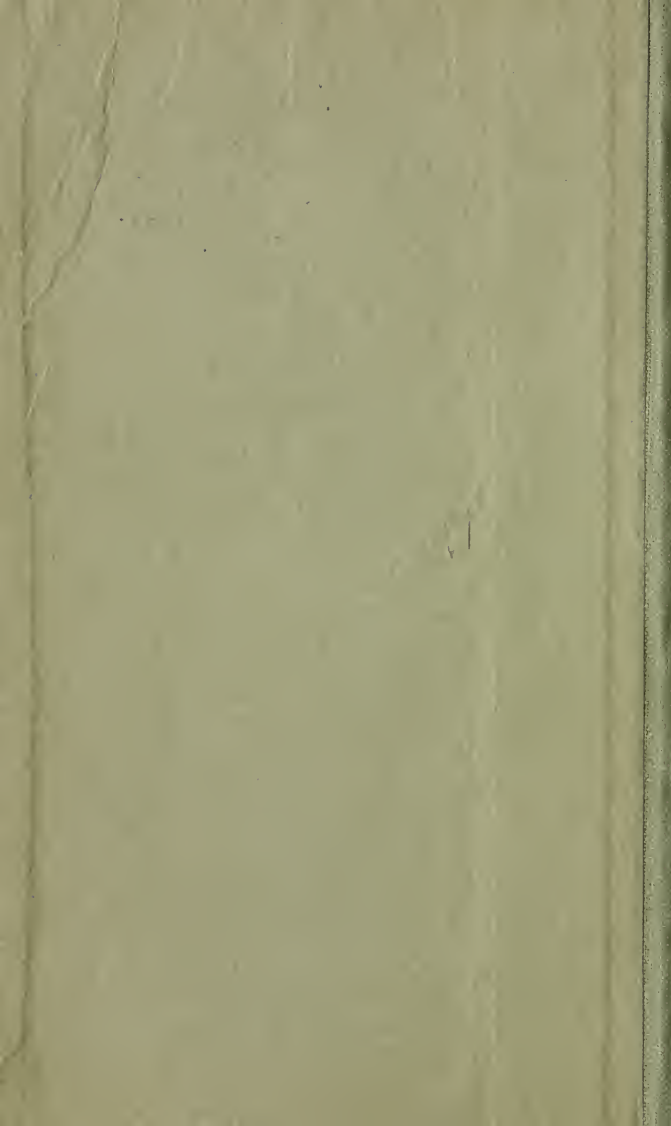


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EZRA STILES.

NEW YORK:

BOSTON:

CHARLES C. LITTLE, AND JAMES BROWN.

1834.

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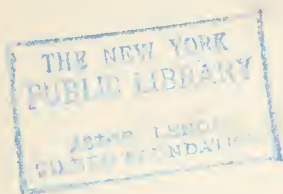
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LIVES

OF

EZRA STILES,

JOHN FITCH,

AND

ANNE HUTCHINSON.

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L I F E  
OF  
EZRA STILES,  
PRESIDENT OF YALE COLLEGE;  
BY  
JAMES L. KINGSLEY, LL. D.



# EZRA STILES.

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## CHAPTER I.

*His Ancestors. — Birth and Education. — Enters Yale College. — His various Studies. — Tutor in the College. — Literary Performances. — Studies Law and Divinity, and settles in the Ministry at Newport, Rhode Island.*

AMONG the scholars of New England, who, in the eighteenth century, were so distinguished by their talents and acquisitions as to deserve the remembrance of posterity, was President Stiles, of Yale College. A life of this eminent man, the materials for which were drawn chiefly from his own manuscripts, was published soon after his death by his son-in-law, the late Dr. Holmes; and it is from this work, his own voluminous private diaries, and other authentic sources, that the following biographical sketch has been derived.

John Stiles, an ancestor of President Stiles,

emigrated from England to America in 1634, and, in the following year, established himself at Windsor, in the colony of Connecticut. His great grandson, Isaac Stiles, was educated at Yale College, where he graduated bachelor of arts, in 1722. In 1724, he was ordained pastor of the church in North Haven, at that time a part of the town of New Haven, where he continued in the faithful discharge of the duties of his office till his death, in 1760. The Reverend Isaac Stiles possessed intellectual powers of more than usual vigor, and held a prominent place among the clergy of Connecticut. He is represented by his contemporaries, as having "a natural gift of elocution," and as being a highly acceptable preacher; and his printed discourses are an example of an energetic style, not a little remarkable for a ready and striking adaptation of scriptural language, as was characteristic of the early divines of New England, to whatever subject he had under consideration.

Mr. Stiles was too ardent in his feelings to confine his efforts, at all times, within the limits of his own parish. When the Reverend George Whitefield visited the colonies, and many of his proceedings were disapproved of by a large number of the clergy and laity of Connecticut, the minister of North Haven was not an indifferent spectator of passing events, and both publicly



and privately took an unequivocal part in opposition to this celebrated itinerant and his followers. Concerning the latter, his language was often that of severe censure. He spoke of them as "led aside by the *ignis fatuus* of their own heated imaginations, and deluded giddy fancies, or by the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive;" as being actuated by a "zeal falsely so called," and as leaving "the pole-star, to follow Jack with a lantern." "The pale moonbeams," he observes, "the glimmering twilight, the feeble, inconstant, and unsteady appearance of light in a variable glow-worm, does more dazzle their eyes, and is thought to afford them more light, than the direct rays of the sun shining in its meridian lustre and brightness."

EZRA STILES, son of the Reverend Isaac Stiles, was born in North Haven, December 10th, 1727. His mother was a daughter of the Reverend Edward Taylor, of Westfield, Massachusetts. She lived a few days only after the birth of this, her only child, leaving him to be conducted through the difficult period of infancy and youth, without the advantage of maternal watchfulness. At first, he was so feeble, that but slight hope was entertained of his long surviving; but with age he increased in strength of constitution. Of his early life little is known, except that he soon

gave indications of a retentive memory, and was distinguished for his good humor and pleasing manners. After acquiring the rudiments of learning at a common school, he proceeded in his education under the tuition of his father, who was well qualified to teach, having himself been prepared for admission to college by the Reverend Timothy Edwards, of Windsor, who for a long time had a high reputation in Connecticut as a classical instructor. Under paternal guidance, the son made such rapid progress in learning, that, at the age of twelve, he was thought to be prepared to enter on his collegiate course. This step, however, was wisely deferred till 1742, when he was admitted into Yale College, being in the fifteenth year of his age. While an under-graduate, he was remarkable for his close and patient attention to study, his literary curiosity and correct deportment. Even then, notwithstanding his love for classical pursuits, he found time to devote himself, beyond what was usual, to astronomy; a science, which he continued to cultivate through life, as far as his other avocations and his means would permit.

At the public examination of his class for the degree of bachelor of arts, in 1746, he was considered by President Clap the proper individual, from his general scholarship, to deliver the oration, at that time customary, on the

course of collegiate study, its object, its mode of pursuit, and its benefits. His discourse on this occasion might afford probable ground of inference, not only as to his own acquirements and favorite studies, but as to the state of the institution, and the estimation in which the different branches of learning were held. In this youthful performance, logic was the first subject of panegyric. This is represented as having an intimate connection with all well-directed intellectual efforts, whether they respect the investigation of the powers of the mind, or mathematical, physical, moral, or theological inquiries. From logic he passes to grammar and rhetoric, under which he includes the study of languages, eloquence, and history. To these succeed mathematics, including astronomy, natural philosophy in its widest application, and, crowning the whole, ethics, as explaining the great principles of human duty both to God and man.

At the Commencement exercises, a few weeks after, as respondent in a syllogistic dispute, he defended a thesis,\* which shows the early turn of his mind for political discussion, and a bias in favor of opinions, which he fully adopted and strenuously maintained in later life. When

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\* Jus regum non est jure divino hæreditarium.

he left the seminary, he was esteemed one of the most finished scholars that had ever received its honors. Soon after he was graduated, he was invited to reside in the family of Captain David Wooster, of New Haven; the same, who afterwards distinguished himself in the campaigns against the French in Canada, and was killed in the revolutionary war, when the British made an incursion into Connecticut in 1777. Captain Wooster, in 1747, was about joining the expedition against Crown Point, and gave Mr. Stiles the invitation above mentioned. This must have been altogether coincident with his wishes. It afforded him an opportunity of free access to books, and the advantages of literary society. These privileges were not neglected. During this period he appears not only to have increased his knowledge by assiduous study, but to have taken enlarged views of the difficulties and dangers of life, and to have formed various resolutions as the ground of his future conduct.

Among the objects which he considered of the highest importance, and which he resolved to keep in view in regulating his heart and life, were the following; in every station of life, to act with judgment, prudence and good humor; to make the business of life a pleasure as well as an employment; to be content with the condition and circumstances allotted by Providence;

to live according to the dictates of reason and religion; to extirpate all vicious inclinations; to improve his mind with useful knowledge, and to live, think, and act rationally here, as a preparation for heaven.

The following sentiment and resolution, in his own language, may be considered as the full and honest expression of his feelings at the time, and which did not vanish from his recollection with the moment, but served to direct and admonish him through life. "I consider myself as a citizen of the intellectual world, and a subject of its almighty Lawgiver and Judge; by him I am placed upon an honorable theatre of action, to sustain, in the sight of mortal and immortal beings, that character and part which he shall assign me, in order to my being trained up for perfection and immortality; and shall, therefore, from this time forth, devote my life to the service of God, my country, and mankind."

In 1749, he was chosen a tutor of Yale College, for which office he was every way qualified; and the situation was one which afforded him an opportunity to pursue his studies more uninterruptedly than before, and to a greater extent. He delighted not less in the communication than in the acquisition of knowledge, and continued in his new station six years, discharging the duties of his place with great fidelity,

respected by his associates in the instruction and government of the college, and beloved by his pupils. The latter were accustomed, in later life, to speak of him with strong expressions of regard and affection.

A short time before this, Dr. Franklin had commenced a course of successful electrical experiments in Philadelphia, which excited uncommon attention in the philosophical world. He had been for some time in correspondence with President Clap, and likewise with the Reverend Jared Eliot, a fellow of the college, and was fully apprized of the interest they took in the advancement of natural science. Not improbably at the request of these gentlemen, Dr. Franklin, in 1749, sent an electrical apparatus to Yale College. This was highly gratifying to Mr. Stiles, who took a leading part in the experiments which were now made in a comparatively new branch of natural philosophy. These are supposed to be among the earliest electrical experiments made in New England. Mr. Stiles soon became acquainted with Dr. Franklin, and commenced with him a correspondence, which continued through the life of the latter.

While Mr. Stiles was in the tutorship, he was called upon to perform various literary exercises ; a circumstance which clearly shows the estimation in which his talents were held. In 1749,

he pronounced a valedictory oration, when, with his class, he was admitted to the degree of master of arts ; in 1750, a funeral oration in honor of Governor Law ; in 1752, a half-century oration, on the completion of fifty years from the time when degrees in the arts were first conferred in the college ; in 1753, an oration in memory of Berkeley, bishop of Cloyne, one of the benefactors of the institution, who died in January of that year ; and in 1755, an oration in compliment of Dr. Franklin, then on a visit to New Haven. In all these performances, he acquitted himself in a manner highly creditable to his talents and acquisitions. In the last, with that strong feeling for the reputation of his country so characteristic of him through life, and on an occasion naturally suggesting thoughts of the future, he anticipates, in strong language, the triumphs of science in America. All these discourses were in Latin. That on the death of Governor Law was published, and also the one in compliment to Franklin.\*

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\* This latter performance is entitled, "In Gratulatione nobilissimi et amplissimi Viri B. Franklini, Armig. Pennsylvan. de Honoribus suis, ob Inventiones ejus eximias et insignes in Electricismo ; Oratio quam ad illum in Aula Acad. Yal. Nov. Angl. habuit Ezra Stiles, Nonis Februarii, MDCCLV." It is contained in William Temple Franklin's *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, Vol. II. p. 289.



Mr. Stiles seems not at once to have decided fully into which of the learned professions he should enter. Apprehending his religious principles to be settled, and impressed with a sense of the importance and duty of making a Christian profession, he was, soon after his graduation, admitted by his father a member of the church of North Haven. His studies, after leaving the college, though much diversified, had been, probably, to a considerable extent, theological; and, in the summer of 1749, he received a license to preach from the New Haven association of ministers.

He soon, however, turned his attention to the study of the law, and took the attorney's oath before the county court at New Haven, in 1753. In view of this profession, he did not limit his inquiries to what was absolutely necessary for admission to its privileges, but, besides acquainting himself with the law practice of Connecticut, he aimed to learn the course of judicial proceedings in all the British provinces. To facilitate the acquisition of this knowledge, he visited several of the other colonies, and sought interviews with the principal legal practitioners. Nor did he confine his researches to local systems of jurisprudence, but aimed to take that comprehensive view of law, as a science, which is requisite to eminence in the profession. This



course of study was, in many respects, advantageous to him in his subsequent life.

The principal reason, however, for the change of his profession, was not a preference for the practice of law as a business for life. Scruples had arisen in his mind respecting the truths of revelation. "I was so thoroughly acquainted," says he, "with the Scriptures, that I had no doubt what were the fundamental doctrines of revelation ; but I had a strong doubt whether the whole was not a fable and delusion." With this unsettled state of opinion on so important a subject, as might be expected from the honesty and sincerity of his character, he did not rest satisfied, but assiduously applied himself to the study of the evidences of revealed religion. The Bible he read with critical attention, compared its several parts with each other, and the whole with profane history ; investigated the subject of the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures, the subject of prophecy, and the other parts of this extensive inquiry. "Add to this," he observes, "with an honest and sincere mind, I daily implored the Father of light for a satisfactory conviction on this subject." He says, likewise, "I was not clear in the supreme divinity and atonement of Jesus, but was satisfied, if revelation was true, that the excellency and dignity of his character were the basis of all ac-

ceptance with God, and accordingly relied on a union and connection with him for salvation." "I believed the Holy Spirit to be the great illuminator and sanctifier of men. In the course of my inquiries, I had renounced all human authority and decisions on religion; and my appealing only to Scripture, and not to the confessions of faith, was the true reason of my being reputed an Arminian; for I had not been conversant in any of the controversies on divinity, nor did I trouble myself about them, as I had higher matters to settle." In 1752, he was earnestly solicited to take orders in the Episcopal church, with advantageous offers of settlement; but he declined. "If Christianity was true," says he, "it was no doubt with me whether episcopacy and the liturgy were a part of it. If the former rested on divine authority, the latter, I was certain, rested on human."

Having come to some satisfactory conclusions as to the truth of revelation, he availed himself, in 1754, of journeys to Newport, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, to attend the worship of various religious denominations. At Newport, he went to the Quakers' meeting; to the Congregational and Episcopal churches at Boston; at New York, to the Episcopal and Dutch-Calvinist churches; and at Philadelphia, he attended on the worship of the Quakers, the

Roman Catholics, and others. The effect of the whole was, to confirm him in the preference of that form of worship in which he had been educated, and which, he was convinced, was nearest to the apostolic form and Scripture model. By 1755, he had emerged from what he denominates the "darkness of skepticism." He remarks, that he never was a disbeliever, that he only "wanted light."

To those who may be troubled with the same embarrassing doubts of the truth of revelation, he recommends, among other things, to lay aside prejudice; to let the search be thorough, not cursory and superficial; to investigate the leading principles of revelation; to become acquainted with scriptural chronology and geography; to consider the nature of typical and allegorical reasoning, together with the manner of interpreting figurative expressions in general; to attend to the manner in which the sacred writers became acquainted with the matters they delivered, to the manner and order in which the sacred books were compiled, the times and languages in which they were written, and the particular occasions on which they were composed. He recommends, also, that "the honest researches of the Scriptures be accompanied with humble supplication to the Father of lights for

instruction.” In his own case, he indulged in inquiries to the widest extent which his means allowed him. He read the ablest works of both infidels and Christians, digested their arguments with care and sober reflection, till his faith rested on the fullest conviction of his understanding.

In April, 1755, during the college vacation, he was invited to preach at Newport, in Rhode Island; and, soon after, the second Congregational church and society in that town gave him a unanimous call to settle with them in the ministry. He had, before this, fully determined to continue in the practice of the law, but was now induced to reconsider the subject. “At length,” he remarks, “partly my friends, especially my father’s inclination, partly an agreeable town, and the Redwood Library, partly the voice of Providence in the unanimity of the people, and partly my love of preaching and prospect of more leisure for pursuing study than I could expect in the law, which, however, I love to this day, induced me to yield, and I gave an affirmative answer to the church and society.” He was ordained to the pastoral office in October of the same year.

## CHAPTER II.

*His Inquiries concerning the Comet of 1759. — Geographical Correspondence. — His Sentiments and Writings on Civil and Religious Liberty. — Investigation of the State of the Churches in New England.*

BEING now happily settled in the Christian ministry, among a people who fully appreciated his worth, he made the appropriate duties of his place his great and leading object; yet he found time to continue his literary and scientific studies. For this purpose, the library established in Newport, a few years before, by the munificence of Mr. Abraham Redwood of that town, afforded him important facilities. Of this institution he was soon appointed librarian; and in the purchase of new books his judgment was much relied on. The benefit of this library Mr. Stiles enjoyed for twenty years. The first scientific subject which engaged his attention was the comet of 1759. The return of this heavenly body was generally expected in 1757; but, in a letter to Professor Winthrop, Mr. Stiles suggested, "that the same cause, which contracted the last, might be so circumstanced as to protract the present revolution of [the comet,] if the

variation of its periods is to be ascribed to the attraction, or disturbing force, of distant celestial bodies." In reply, Professor Winthrop observed, "You have very happily conjectured what will probably turn out to be the truth." The means for astronomical observations within the reach of Mr. Stiles were very inadequate; but when the comet appeared, he marked its progress very carefully with such aids as he possessed, and preserved his own observations, together with those of other astronomers, which came to his knowledge.

It should be recollected, that in 1759, the circumstances of the country were extremely diverse from what they are at present; but in none more worthy of notice, than in the case of obtaining information from other parts of the world. The little news, which reached America, of what was transacting on the continent of Europe, came, for the most part, through English newspapers; and these were received at comparatively long intervals. Any information from Asia or Africa was even more rare; and, as to the North American continent, very little was known of it, except of that portion on the sea-coast occupied by the thirteen colonial governments.\* In this state of

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\* In a letter to an English correspondent, in 1772, he writes as follows. "Should you pursue the design of visit-

things, strong curiosity respecting remote nations, or even the more distant parts of our own country, was seldom excited. To judge correctly of the efforts and pursuits of individuals, it is necessary to have in view their situation, and the influence which the character of those around them, and of the age, may have upon their tastes,

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ing America, perhaps you may think it best to come first to Charleston, South Carolina. There you will find Mr. Gadsden, and other friends of public liberty. From thence, by water, you may come to Virginia, where you will find an Assembly firm in the cause of liberty. From Williamsburg it may be best to travel by land to the northward. In Maryland you may find the sensible Mr. Dulany. At Philadelphia you will find Dr. Alison, Dr. Dickinson, Chief Justice Allen, and many other patriots. At New York, among others, you will take satisfaction in seeing Mr. William Livingston and Mr. John Morin Scott. Travelling along through Connecticut, you may see Governor Trumbull and others, in your way to Newport, where you will find Mr. Merchant, Mr. Ellery, Mr. Bowler, and among them I myself shall be happy in waiting upon you. The late Governor Ward and Governor Hopkins, both now living in this colony, will take pleasure in seeing you. You will then proceed to Boston, and find Mr. Otis, Mr. Adams, Mr. Cushing, Mr. Hancock, and the Reverend Dr. Chauncy. I flatter myself you may find agreeable entertainment among them. You will proceed to Piscataqua, and, returning to Boston, may make an excursion across New England to Springfield, on Connecticut River, and so down to Hartford; thence across the new towns to Albany, and so down along Hudson's River to New York." The whole west was a blank.



occupations, and endeavors. It is in this light, that the course of life adopted by Mr. Stiles should be contemplated. It ought to be considered with what inconsiderable means, and with how little encouragement from the coöperation and sympathy of others, he was constantly endeavoring to extend his knowledge, in whatever direction there appeared any prospect of success.

To obtain exact information of the unexplored parts of his own country, was with him a leading object. Thus, soon after his settlement at Newport, he wrote, through the agency of an English merchant in New Spain, a letter to the head of the Jesuits' College in Mexico, to ascertain, if possible, what discoveries had been made on the American continent beyond California. He had learned, that intelligence from the north-western Catholic missions passed through the hands of that dignitary, and supposed it possible, that from this source he might find out how far the discoveries of the Catholic missionaries had been extended, beyond what had appeared in their published works. It will be recollected, that the north-western coast of this continent was, at that time, an unknown region; and the proximity of America to Asia, now appearing in every geographical treatise, was matter of conjecture. The bearing, which the fact of the near approach of the two continents to each other had on the



question of the original peopling of America, gave this circumstance an importance beyond what it would have, if proceeding from mere curiosity respecting the state of remote countries.

That he received any answer to his inquiries, is not known; and his writing this letter is mentioned rather as proof of his readiness to take advantage of every opportunity to acquire valuable information, than from any important result in this particular case. His object is manifest from what he published a few years later, when the actual relation of the two continents had been correctly ascertained. The same year, he wrote to a correspondent in London on the same subject of inquiry. "I find," says he, "by the magazines, that there is lately published a history of California, in two volumes. I want much to see how far the Europeans have pursued their travels and discoveries on the north-west part of this continent. I find also, that last year there was published at Petersburg a map of the Russian empire, in which it is extended beyond Kamtschatka, connecting the two continents of Asia and America. If you have seen them, pray give me, in your next, a brief account of what is to be depended on, especially with respect to the junction of the two continents. If it should be in your power, and you should be so good as to introduce me to a correspondence with some

gentlemen of your acquaintance in Petersburg, or Copenhagen, or any where up the Baltic, you would greatly increase my obligations." About the same time, by a learned Jew from Saphat, in Galilee, he addressed a letter in Latin to some Greek priest or bishop living in the Holy Land, or in Syria. The inquiries in that letter respected the geography of those countries and the parts adjacent, the state of the Oriental Christians, and especially those of the Greek communion. He requests an account of the Gentiles beyond the Caspian Sea, with reference to the remains of the ten tribes. The same zeal in seeking for information from distant countries attended him through life, and was one of his striking characteristics.

Another subject, in which he early took a deep interest, was that of civil and religious liberty. For the latter especially, as having a near relation to his own position in society, he entertained a constant solicitude, and wished to be considered one of its most strenuous advocates. And here again it is necessary, in order that his sentiments may be fully appreciated, to take into view the connection of the colonies with England, the different degrees in which religious liberty was enjoyed in different parts of the former, and especially the state of public opinion and feeling. In appointments to office, the English

government restricted the selection of candidates generally to members of the Episcopal church. In allusion to this fact, he remarks, in a letter to a correspondent in Edinburgh, "How lamentable, that any unnecessary embarrassment should be laid on men of public spirit, loyalty, and love of liberty, whatever their religious sentiments! It would be more agreeable to this country, if Presbyterians and Dissenters were not precluded from office and employments in the gift of the crown. All the provincial governors, custom-house officers, and, in general, all who enjoy lucrative offices, not in the bestowment of the provincial assemblies, from Nova Scotia to Georgia, and in the West India Islands, are appointed from among one sect, to the neglect of all others; which can yet furnish as sensible men, compose a far more numerous body here, and are as loyal at least and faithful to his majesty. This, indeed, is agreeable to the Levant policy; but I judge, that Egypt would be more easily governed by bashaws appointed from among its inhabitants, than by those sent from Constantinople."

His notions of catholicism, at this time, may be inferred from the following remarks. "In my opinion, an attachment to the Presbyterian and Congregational principles, so far as it implies an opposition to unscriptural prelacy, is consistent with the greatest generosity of soul, and with

Christian charity to those who differ from us. It is one glory of a Presbyterian to be catholic and benevolent ; it is another glory to stand fast in the faith. Many do not stop at the distinction between being charitable to another sect and joining it. I may have charity for, and a good opinion of, a Lutheran ; I may have a better for a Calvinist, and yet be strictly neither. I may have a good opinion of, and Christian affection for, all Protestant churches ; I may have a very good opinion of those of Geneva and Holland ; but, perhaps, best of all for those of Scotland, or for those of New England."

In the year 1760, he had an opportunity of expressing his views more at large on the subject of the relation in which Christians of different sentiments stand towards each other ; and the expediency and duty, more particularly in the colonies, of neglecting minor differences, and uniting in the defence and support of the great principles in which they were agreed. At the same time, he made public the result of investigations, which he had been pursuing with great diligence, to ascertain the state of the New England churches, the faith professed by them, their number, the number of the clergy, and the prospects of religious institutions generally in the colonies.

His opinions were presented in a "Discourse

on Christian Union," delivered before the convention of Congregational ministers, in Rhode Island. The agreement of the New England churches in the belief of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and of their being a sufficient rule of faith and practice, was a point about which he supposed there was no question. Where a diversity of opinion really existed, he suggested, that it was less than it appeared. He maintained, that unity of sentiment was not to be sought by the coercion of civil and ecclesiastical punishments, but by the force of persuasion and truth; not by appeals to Arminius and Calvin, but to the inspired writings; and that all have the unalienable right of private judgment in religion. These are the views, of which he was the advocate through life; and if now there is little novelty in such declarations, and in those before quoted, it should be kept in mind at what time they were made.

The "liberty of the churches" was another subject, which he ever held to be of great moment, and did not forget, on the occasion of delivering this discourse, to give it due prominence. His decision was, that there can be no such exigency as to render it lawful or wise "to erect any body of men into a standing judiciary over the churches." "Let our churches,"

says he, "be taught to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free."

The information respecting the Congregational churches (and at that time there were comparatively few others in New England) it may not be without use to insert here. "The present state of our denomination," he observes, "as to numbers, for the year 1760, is this. In Massachusetts, there are above three hundred Congregational churches; in Connecticut, one hundred and seventy; in New Hampshire, forty-three; which, with those in this colony, (Rhode Island,) form a body of about five hundred churches. In 1650, there were about thirty churches already founded; several of which were small beginnings, requiring many years to fill up. In 1696, there were but one hundred and thirty Congregational churches in all New England; and being in 1760 increased to five hundred and thirty, the proportion of doubling is once in thirty years. In 1643, there had arrived, in two hundred and ninety-eight transports, about four thousand and two hundred planters, with their families, making about twenty-one thousand and two hundred for all New England. Since that time, more have gone from us to Europe, than have arrived from thence hither. The present inhabitants, therefore, of New England, are justly to be estimated a natural increase, by the blessing of Heaven on

the first twenty-one thousand, that arrived by the year 1643." This discourse, from the amount of new statistical information, as well as the sentiments expressed, made its author extensively known, and gained him much reputation both in the colonies and in England.

The same year Mr. Stiles delivered a sermon to his congregation, on the day of a public thanksgiving in the colony of Rhode Island, which contained a passage evincive of his nice observation of the course of events in New England and the other British settlements in North America; of the progress of public sentiment; and of the probable advance of the country in self-government. This thanksgiving was appointed in consequence of the surrender of Montreal, which completed the English conquest of Canada. Such an occasion naturally led to reflections on the future as well as on the past. After having observed, that we were "planting an empire of better laws and religion" than existed in Europe, he added, "it is probable, that in time there will be formed a *provincial confederacy*, and a common council, standing on free provincial suffrage; and this may in time terminate in an imperial diet, where the imperial dominion will subsist, as it ought, in *election*."

The death of George the Second occurred in October of the same year. On the 20th of



January, 1761, Mr. Stiles preached a discourse on this event, and the accession of George the Third, in which he gave still further proof of his political sagacity. In speaking of the auspicious circumstances in which the latter commenced his reign, he proceeds to say, "Since much will depend on the just exercise of the prerogative, with which, by the British constitution and universal explicit suffrage of our empire, he is now vested, it will not be ungrateful to him to know, that he is, every Lord's day, accompanied to the throne of grace with the fervent addresses of half a million of loyal Christians in New England, for that supernal influence on his royal mind from the Supreme King of the universe, by whom subordinate kings reign and princes decree justice. This will be the more necessary for us to continue on our part, not only from the efficacy of joint and ardent supplication, but from the possible exigencies of New England, which may fall within the period of his majesty's reign. As there are men, who have a mighty opinion of retrenching the liberties of these colonies, or throwing a net of policy over them, which may amount to a deprivation, so if these, with their projections, should gain access to his majesty's ear, mistaken representations may induce his majesty to accede to measures of unhappy consequence to the liberty of America." From his extensive inter-



course with gentlemen of intelligence in different departments of life, in various parts of the country, he became well acquainted with the state of feeling in the community, more particularly in New England, on most questions of public policy ; especially on whatever respected the relation between the colonies and the parent state.

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### CHAPTER III.

*Takes an active Part in founding a College in Rhode Island. — His Intercourse and Correspondence with a Jewish Rabbi. — His remarkable Acquisitions in the Oriental Languages. — Anecdote of General Greene. — Dr. Stiles's pastoral Labors.*

MR. STILES, as has been already mentioned, amidst his various occupations and engagements, retained his love of science, and was constantly attentive to its progress. On subjects of this department of knowledge, he was in correspondence with President Clap, of Yale College, Professor Winthrop, of Harvard, and Dr. Franklin. In Newport he found some congeniality of

taste in the Reverend Gardiner Thurston, pastor of a Baptist church. Between these two clergymen a degree of friendship and familiarity existed, very unusual, certainly, at that time, between preachers of different denominations. They were engaged together occasionally in astronomical and meteorological observations, and not unfrequently, as is supposed, occupied each other's pulpit. It is hardly possible, that, in this free intercourse, they should not confer on the state of education, at that time, in Rhode Island.

From the circumstances and opinions of the first planters of that colony, little attention had been paid to schools; and as yet no provision had been made for instruction in the higher branches of literature. At what time, or by whom, the project of a college in Rhode Island was first started, is matter of doubt. That such an institution was thought of, and was the subject of serious deliberation, a considerable time before a charter was actually granted by the colonial legislature, is certain. In this subject, Mr. Stiles, as might be expected, took a deep interest, and, with his accustomed zeal, set about devising a plan of uniting several denominations of Christians in this enterprise, and of procuring funds for carrying it into execution. What part of the scheme, so far as perfected, was his, is not known. It is however probable, that it was the result of

consultation among those, who looked upon the founding of another college in New England as desirable. That Mr. Stiles was chiefly employed in the collection of facts, on which all proceedings, in an affair of such importance, were to rest, there is no doubt.

There were, at that time, but two colleges in New England, Harvard and Yale; both under the control of Congregationalists, and in a flourishing state. In New Jersey, a college had been established by the Presbyterians, which had risen rapidly in public estimation and usefulness. With these exceptions, the collegiate institutions in the colonies had been established by Episcopalians, and were under their influence. This was the case in Virginia, New York, and Pennsylvania; and if colleges were chartered in the Carolinas and Maryland, it was thought probable, "because all the governors in the King's appointment will be Episcopal, or restricted by instructions," that they would be Episcopal also. It should be here remarked, that the opposition of Mr. Stiles, and of those who acted with him, to Episcopal colleges, or the necessity which they felt of counteracting their influence, proceeded in a great degree from political considerations. He had become convinced, whether correctly or not it is unimportant here to determine, that the Episcopal clergy generally, and the leading individuals

among the laity in the same communion, especially in New England, were hostile to the privileges granted in several of the royal charters, and were endeavoring to undermine them. Hence the prominence he was disposed to give to this part of the subject.

To aid in forming some practical scheme for establishing the proposed college, Mr. Stiles had instituted an inquiry into the number of Congregational, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches, not only in the colonies, but in Great Britain and Ireland. The conclusion to which he came was, that the whole number of churches of these denominations was three thousand six hundred and thirty-eight, of which two hundred and eighty were Baptist. He supposed, that all these churches might be induced to contribute to the establishment and support of an institution, which would so greatly subserve their interests.

He remarked, that "the efforts used at home to promote the Episcopal cause in America, will excite a spirit of emulation among the Dissenters to promote their cause here also; especially as this is the quickest and only way to advance themselves in connection with us; it being easy now to convince them, that there is a prospect that the united Dissenting interest through the British empire, in one century, with proper care,

may far exceed the Episcopal establishment in South Britain." He adds, that when this state of things shall exist, "joint and respectful application to the crown and British Parliament cannot fail to rescue our brethren in England and Ireland from remaining oppression, open the avenues of public offices to all, and restore universal liberty, equality, and independence to each of the religious Protestant denominations." "This," he supposes, "with other arguments, may engage the body of Dissenters in our interest to contribute with a generous liberality, far beyond any thing they have yet done; especially as the royal permission for a collection in the whole body of the Episcopal churches in England is now making in favor of the New York and Philadelphia colleges." He anticipates, that the Baptists will be "doubly engaged to promote a college, in which they have so great an influence, as in the proposed one of Rhode Island." The probability was, however, as he estimated it, that the Presbyterians and Congregationalists would be able to contribute "four or five times as much" as the Baptists; and the former, "if pleased with the thing," might furnish the greatest number of students.

Accordingly, a committee of Baptists and Congregationalists was appointed to draft a charter of a college; and of this body, Mr. Stiles and

Mr. William Ellery were designated to prepare such an instrument for their consideration. In the draft which they presented, there was provision made for a president, a board of trustees, and a board of fellows. The president was always to be a Baptist. The board of trustees, the number of whom was to be thirty-six, was to consist of Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Quakers ; but a majority to be Baptists. The board of fellows was to be composed of twelve members, inclusive of the president ; eight of whom were to "be forever elected of the denomination called Congregationalists, and the rest indifferently of any or all denominations." It was likewise provided, that the concurrence of the trustees and fellows should be necessary to the validity of all acts, "except in adjudging and conferring academical degrees, which shall ever belong exclusively to the fellowship, as a learned faculty."

This draft was approved by the committee, and presented to the colonial legislature in August, 1763. As a longer time was asked for its consideration, it was put over till the session in February of the next year ; when, with some alterations, it received the legislative sanction. The principal, if not the only, changes in the draft of the charter were, that the number of Congregationalists in the board of trustees was

reduced to four, one less than was allowed the Episcopalians; and in the board of fellows, instead of "Congregationalists," in the passage above quoted, it was made to read, "Baptists or Antipædobaptists." It is highly probable, from internal evidence, that the charter was drawn principally by Mr. Stiles; Mr. Ellery having little concern in preparing it, except to see to the correctness of the legal language. Whoever drew it, he had obviously before him the charters of Yale College, and was familiar with the questions which had arisen with respect to them. The privileges secured to the university by this charter are very ample; and the language of the several provisions is remarkably full, precise, and explicit. It is, undoubtedly, in many respects, one of the best college charters in New England.

Mr. Stiles was named in the charter as one of the fellows, but declined accepting the place. He probably thought that he could not, with any prospect of success, according to the original plan, be concerned in asking contributions, from the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, for the college as now constituted. Though often and earnestly solicited to act as a fellow of the college, he persisted in his first determination; but he was too sincere a friend to literature, and too catholic in his principles, not to have taken part in building up this new insti-



tution, if he had thought such a course consistent with his duty; nor is there reason to believe, if he had lived to see the eminence which Brown University has attained, that any of its friends and patrons would have more rejoiced in the event.

In 1765, Mr. Stiles received from the University of Edinburgh a diploma of doctor in divinity. This honor had been solicited for him by his friend, Dr. Franklin, who, in writing to Dr. Robertson, the celebrated historian, at that time principal of the university, recommended Mr. Stiles as a divine of "an excellent character," and as "greatly esteemed by his brethren, the clergy, even of other denominations, for his extensive learning, and the catholicism of his temper." The degree was accordingly conferred. At this time, there were but few doctors of divinity in the British North American colonies; and the honor of being one of the number was perhaps proportionally increased. One effect of this new testimonial to his literary and official character, was to incite him to greater efforts to extend his professional knowledge. His "ambition was touched, or rather a sense of shame excited, that a *Doctor of Divinity* should not understand a language" so important in explaining the Jewish Scriptures, and so easily acquired, as the Hebrew. For learning



this language he had peculiar facilities in Newport, as there was at that place a Jewish synagogue. By the aid of the Huzzan, with whom, from often attending the Jewish service, he was acquainted, he was soon able to add largely to his heretofore small stock of Hebrew knowledge. He adopted a rule, to which he rigidly adhered, of reading a portion of the Hebrew Bible every day. The consequence of this was, that a study at first undertaken or resumed with some reluctance, and certainly from a sense of duty, became in a short time a passion, which rather increased than abated through the remainder of his life.

To read the sacred language with facility was not in his view sufficient; he wished to write it with equal ease. Accordingly, he sought opportunities of corresponding in Hebrew with such learned Jews as visited Rhode Island; and, in 1773, an event occurred which greatly favored his object. At this time, he formed an acquaintance with Haijim Isaac Carigal, a learned Rabbi, who officiated some time in the Newport synagogue. This Jew was a native of Hebron, in the Holy Land, and was deeply versed in biblical and especially rabbinical literature. He had travelled extensively in the East, had visited the principal cities of the Turkish empire and Persia, and the capitals of most European coun-

tries ; and, being a man of intelligence and observation, had amassed an unusual amount of curious and useful knowledge.

Soon after his arrival, Dr. Stiles addressed to him a letter, in the Hebrew language, making inquiries on some points of sacred literature, to which the Rabbi very readily replied. An intercourse between the two commenced, which led to a mutual friendship, and contributed apparently to the pleasure and improvement of both. Dr. Stiles attended the service of the synagogue, and the Rabbi by agreement came, on one occasion, to hear a sermon from Dr. Stiles on the dispensations of God towards his chosen people, the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, and on the duty of Christians to desire a participation in its splendor and happiness. It was the first sermon which he had ever heard from a Christian preacher.

It was not long, however, before this interchange of civilities was in danger of being interrupted. Rabbi Carigal came to Dr. Stiles, and, in some agitation and embarrassment, informed him that he highly prized the advantages of the intercourse existing between them ; that to converse on the history and literature of his nation was his delight ; but that the continuance of their meetings must depend on the condition, that nothing should be said of *Jesus of Nazareth*.

This, though not unexpected, was to Dr. Stiles a perplexing and painful announcement. He had no hesitation in not complying with the request of the Rabbi, but wished to enjoy still the pleasure and benefit of his society, and conducted the conversation so temperately and discreetly, as for the time to quiet his friend's alarm of Christian contamination. Afterwards, the apprehension and prejudice of the Jew were so far overcome, that he received from Dr. Stiles an argument, drawn up however in Hebrew, to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was really the Messiah of the Hebrew prophets.

This employment of the Hebrew language may possibly appear to some as mere literary amusement, and a useless expense of time and labor. But it should be recollected, that such a man as Rabbi Carigal could be approached in no way so easily as through the ancient language of his nation ; and that, through such a medium, he might be induced to listen to considerations, which, if presented in a modern tongue, he would have turned from with disgust. The deportment, which Dr. Stiles uniformly maintained towards the Jews in Newport, won largely on their favor and respect. Most of them were foreigners, and must have viewed with something like astonishment the regard shown their nation by a learned Christian ; as they could not but

recollect the coldness and contumely, to say nothing of legal restraints and disabilities, with which they had been treated among most or all nations on the eastern continent.

With such a disposition to make use of every advantage to forward his favorite purpose, Dr. Stiles made rapid advances in Oriental studies. In comparatively a short time, he read and gained a good knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Chaldee of the Old Testament, and the Targums, and made no inconsiderable progress in Syriac and Arabic. He read portions of the Talmud, dipped into the Persic and Coptic, and some other Oriental tongues. Of the facility with which these languages can be acquired, his opinion deserves notice. "I could learn," says he, "Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and Armenian, with less pains than the Latin only." Of this he may have convinced himself. A willing mind, zeal, and perseverance, accomplish wonders in any pursuit.

While Dr. Stiles resided at Newport, the Congregational clergy of Rhode Island became associated for the purpose of mutual aid and improvement. Arrangements were adopted for meeting in convention at stated times; and it is understood that the union thus formed has continued to the present time. In bringing about a more intimate connection among those of the

same faith and ecclesiastical order in the colony, than had before existed, Dr. Stiles took an active and efficient part.

A disposition to encourage young men, who gave indications of uncommon talents, or who expressed a strong desire of acquiring knowledge, was early manifest in Dr. Stiles. Two instances which illustrate this trait of his character deserve to be recorded. While he resided at Newport, he was visited by a youth, named Hamilton, from the neighborhood of Providence, who could read but little, scarcely knew the nine digits, and could set down no sum in figures, yet had a surprising talent for adding and multiplying large numbers. When asked how many minutes there were in ten million years, he answered the inquiry correctly in less than one minute.

This was a case to excite the highest interest in Dr. Stiles. After putting to this young man many similar questions, the solutions of which were readily returned, he endeavored to excite his curiosity by opening to him a new field for the application of numbers. He gave him an outline of the solar system, spoke of the number of suns besides our own, each of which was probably the centre of habitable worlds. Being led on step by step, young Hamilton was enabled to extend his views, to think of num-

bers in a manner somewhat less abstract, till he was filled with amazement. Nothing further of this youth is known; and the case is mentioned only as illustrating the usual mode which Dr. Stiles adopted, to incite those who had made any attainments in knowledge to press forward to still greater acquisitions. He delighted to make them see, that, even in their own chosen path, there was a point which they had not yet attained.

The second instance was more remarkable in its issue. As he was sitting one day in a book-seller's shop in Newport, a young man entered, dressed in a plain Quaker garb, which exhibited marks of the laborious occupation of the wearer, and said that he wished "to buy a book." When he was asked what book, he was thrown into some embarrassment, from which Dr. Stiles, struck with his frank and ingenuous countenance, stepped forward to relieve him. After some conversation, a book was selected; and Dr. Stiles was so much pleased with his new acquaintance, that he invited him to his house, and gave him advice respecting his future reading. This casual interview led to greater intimacy; and the youth, in his frequent visits to Newport on business, often called on his clerical friend, to receive new counsel and direction in the prosecution of his studies. This aspirant after knowledge,

so promptly aided and encouraged by Dr. Stiles, was NATHANAEL GREENE, whose services in the revolutionary war place him in the highest rank among his countrymen, as a military commander and patriot. General Greene retained through life his friendship for Dr. Stiles, and ever spoke of him with great respect and veneration.

About the year 1763, Dr. Stiles, from various inquiries, became convinced, that the manufacture of silk might be prosecuted advantageously in the colonies. He collected what information he could from books, and by foreign correspondence, relating to this subject, persuaded many to cultivate the mulberry-tree, and through life endeavored, in various ways, to turn the attention of the public to what he believed might be, to no inconsiderable portion of the community, a profitable employment. Some of the raw silk, the product of these efforts, was early sent from Rhode Island to England, to be manufactured into cloth.

It may not be an unnatural conclusion of some, that a man engaged in so many pursuits must have been deficient in his pastoral labors. Such an inference, however, in the case of Dr. Stiles, would be erroneous. Few Christian ministers, it may be truly said, have been more assiduous in the discharge of their peculiar functions. Besides the ordinary business of preach-



ing, in which his performances were always highly acceptable to his hearers, he instituted a regular meeting, at his own house, of the members of his church, for mutual edification and encouragement in a religious life. At these times, after singing and prayer, he was accustomed to deliver informal discourses on Christian doctrine and practice. The Africans and their descendants were not forgotten. Newport, at this time, was one of the principal ports in the English colonies, from which the slave trade was carried on. Most of the slaves thus brought to Rhode Island were sold at the southern marts, but the number in Newport was not small.

Dr. Stiles very early turned his attention to this traffic in negroes, and entertained doubts of its justice. Soon after he removed to Newport, he mentions, in a letter to Professor Winthrop, the arrival of a cargo of slaves from the coast of Africa, expresses strong sympathy in their condition, and asks how such a commerce can be defended. In his pastoral duties, he made no distinction between the bond and free. The slaves, who were members of his church, he met at stated intervals in his study, knelt with them in prayer, and, in language suited to their comprehension, explained the



most important doctrines and precepts of the Bible.

The catechizing of children he considered an important part of his ministerial duty, and was very assiduous in practising it. Here the children of the Africans of his congregation were remembered. These members of his flock were assembled likewise, and such measures pursued as were thought best adapted to give them early impressions of religious truth. If it be asked how he found time for all this, the answer is, by adopting and maintaining a well-digested method in all his employments. He had regular seasons for his devotions, for attention to the affairs of his family, for his studies in the several departments, for visiting his parishioners, and a fixed hour for rising in the morning, and for retiring at night. Such uniformity of life is the great secret of the economy of time.

It need hardly be mentioned here, that a strong mutual attachment existed between Dr. Stiles and his Newport congregation. The people of his spiritual charge were fully aware of the value of his services among them, and could not but be gratified, also, with the estimation in which their minister was held by others. Their repeated manifestations of kindness were fully reciprocated on his part; and the just expectation of both seemed to be, that their union

would be terminated only by the death of the pastor.

But the difficulties, which were every day increasing between Great Britain and the colonies, now threatened to disturb their peace. Newport was so situated as to afford easy access to an invading force; and the excellence of the harbor might cause it to be selected as one of the principal stations of the royal navy. Some time in 1775, the town was thrown into a general panic. A British naval officer had threatened to fire upon it; and the inhabitants were informed, likewise, by a letter from General Washington, that a thousand of the king's troops, with some ships of war, had sailed lately from Boston, designed, as was feared, to attack some seaport. Within a few days, the news of the burning of Falmouth, in Maine, was received; and apprehensions, not without reason, were entertained, that Newport might share soon the same fate. Some of the inhabitants had before removed into the interior; and the number of fugitives was now so increased, that it was judged expedient, by the remnant of Dr. Stiles's congregation, that for a time public worship should be discontinued, and that the pastor himself should remove to Bristol.

## CHAPTER IV.

*His political Sentiments and patriotic Zeal, and his accurate Knowledge of the true State of the Controversy between Great Britain and the Colonies.—His Congregation dispersed when the Enemy take Possession of Newport.—Invited to preach in Boston and to settle in the Ministry at Portsmouth.—Elected President of Yale College.—State of that Institution.*

FROM the time when the designs of the British government to subject the colonies to a more rigid exercise of authority were no longer doubtful, Dr. Stiles had been among the most decided and open in his opinion that opposition was certain and necessary. As early as 1765, when the system of gradual encroachment on colonial rights, which had been resolved on by the ministry, was detailed to him, his reply was, "that before the plan could be effected, such a spirit would be roused in the people, as would prevent its execution." The Reverend Dr. Richard Price, in a letter to Dr. Stiles, soon after the peace of 1783, uses the following language. "You favored me with a letter just at the beginning of the late war, and I believe I answered it; but probably my answer never came

to your hands. This letter I have thought very remarkable. You have predicted in it the very event in which the war has issued ; particularly the conversion of the colonies into so many distinct and independent states, united under Congress."

To his correspondents in England he early foretold the issue of the approaching contest. In 1774, he wrote to one of his English correspondents, "Not a politician in Europe, not even a single man in America, believes that the increasing millions of this continent will always submit to despotism. There are many means of redress. We shall not be discouraged if all prove unsuccessful, till we come to the last, the success of which is indubitable." "If oppression proceeds, despotism may force an annual Congress ; and a public spirit of enterprise may originate an American *Magna Charta*, and *Bill of Rights*, supported with such intrepid and persevering importunity, as even sovereignty may hereafter judge it not wise to withstand. There will be a *Runnymede* in America."

To a correspondent, in 1772, Dr. Stiles says, "Every step England has taken for some years past, at least the general system of colony administration, has had as direct a tendency to accelerate events which she would keep at a distance, as if projected with the deep-laid pol-

icy of the Conclave. The enemies of Great Britain could not wish her to adopt any other system. It is most firmly believed, throughout all America, that Providence intends a glorious English empire here. When Heaven shall have doubled our millions a few times more, it will not be in the power of our enemies to chastise us with scorpions." Such, at this period, was the general strain of his letters, as well as of his conversation, and occasional public addresses.

One of the measures of the General Congress, which assembled in Philadelphia in September, 1774, was to recommend a fast to be observed throughout the United Colonies. This was an occasion to rouse in Dr. Stiles the spirit of the old Puritans, of which he inherited so large a portion. To an assembly greater than he had ever before addressed in Newport, he preached from the words, "Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are unto thee;"\* and, in his discourse, he mingled with the spirit of devotion the ardor of patriotism.

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\* 2 Chron. xx. 11, 12. On a fast in Rhode Island, June 30th, 1774, the Episcopal clergyman in Newport, the Rever-

As his professional labors in Newport were now discontinued, and it was uncertain when they would be resumed, he thought of retiring to some populous part of the country remote from the sea-coast, and offering himself as a teacher in geography, mathematics, and history. Another project, which he had under consideration, was to read public lectures at Cambridge, or New Haven, on Oriental literature and ecclesiastical history.

An occurrence, about this time, which seems to have deeply interested his feelings, and called forth strong expressions of gratitude, was an invitation from the Reverend Dr. Chauncy, of Boston, to come to that town and assist him in his pastoral duties; accompanied, as an inducement, with the voluntary offer of one half of what was weekly contributed for his own support. His ministerial services were solicited, likewise, at Providence, Taunton, and Dighton. To the last place, after mature consideration, he removed his family in March, 1776, where he performed divine service on Sundays, though occasionally he visited the residue of his flock at Newport. At Dighton he remained only till the spring of 1777, when he received a request, under very

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end Mr. Bisset, had preached from a text which he probably thought not less appropriate; "*When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites.*" (Matt. vi. 16.)

favorable circumstances, from the first church and society of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to remove to that town. With this he complied. He was now at a place open to the sea, but less exposed to hostile attacks than Newport. The hospitable attentions of the people of Portsmouth gave him great pleasure. He was furnished with a good house for the reception of his family, with an ample support, and was treated with all the kindness he could wish.

But a new scene for his labors was now opening, not anticipated by himself, but confidently expected by others. The Reverend Dr. Daggett, in April, 1777, had resigned the presidency of Yale College; and those interested in that institution were inquiring who should be his successor. In the following summer, at a conference of the corporation of the college with a committee of the legislature of Connecticut, Dr. Stiles was mentioned by the civilians as the most prominent candidate for the presidential chair. He was elected president in September of the same year. On hearing of this event, he wrote to one of his friends in Connecticut, "My election to the presidency of Yale College is an unexpected and wonderful ordering of divine Providence; not but that it has been talked of for years past; but I knew such reasons as made it, in my view, morally impossible



that I should be elected. When, therefore, any of my partial friends were pleased to compliment me with the expectation of such an event, these insuperable obstacles occurred to my mind, and rendered the mention of it disgusting; so that I have no more resolved in my mind, whether I am qualified for such an office, than for that of a prime minister or a sultan."

Among the "obstacles" to which he alludes, the chief undoubtedly was, the difference, on some points of theology, between the opinions which he entertained, and those required in a president by the existing regulations of the fellows. He had likewise published some views of ecclesiastical government, which he supposed were not very acceptable to the Connecticut clergy; and he had not long before taken part in an ordination in Connecticut, which he knew most or all the members of the corporation considered irregular and schismatical. On receiving, however, the official notice of his election, in compliance with the request which accompanied it, he visited the college, and had a personal interview with the fellows, which terminated in such arrangement as removed all difficulties in the way of his accepting the presidency. At the same time, he was elected professor of ecclesiastical history. During the same visit, he had interviews likewise with several prominent individuals



in civil life, and was convinced, that there was great unanimity, both among the clergy and laity, in wishing him to enter on the office to which he had been invited.

But there was one consideration, which in his mind weighed heavily against the measure. He had never yet been formally separated from his Newport church; and in their dispersed state, there seemed to be no practicable way of obtaining their consent to the dissolution of the pastoral connection. Several of the most influential of his parishioners, however, advised him to accept his new appointment; as did his friends and correspondents in various parts of the country. In the mean time, the society of Portsmouth had given him a unanimous invitation to settle with them in the ministry. But after much reflection, he determined to accept of the presidency of Yale College, and accordingly removed with his family to New Haven in June of the following year.

On the 8th of July, 1778, in the presence of the whole collegiate body, many of the clergy, and other gentlemen of education, he was inducted into the presidential office. On this occasion he pronounced an inaugural Latin oration, which was published. One, who has since been among the most distinguished of his pupils,\* an

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\* Chancellor Kent.

under-graduate, at that time, of the freshman class, referring, in 1831, in a public discourse at New Haven, to the transactions of that day, uses the following language. "At the inauguration of President Stiles, as head of the college, he delivered a Latin oration, at which I was present as the youngest of all his pupils. It was delivered with great animation, and contained a short but brilliant sketch of the entire circle of the arts and sciences; and no single production of his pen exhibits so complete a specimen of the extent and variety of his mental accomplishments."

The college, over which he was now to preside, when committed to his care, was, in several important respects, in a very depressed state. Its funds had always been small, and were now nearly exhausted; and the legislature of Connecticut, at all times affording it aid reluctantly and sparingly, could not be expected, while laboring under the expenses and burdens of the revolutionary struggle, to grant it present relief. Fears had likewise been justly entertained, that New Haven might be attacked by the enemy in their descents on the coast; and the library and other college property had, in consequence, been carried into the country. Several of the college classes also had been instructed, for a time, in the interior. The whole community was in a state of feverish agitation; and those

who would devote themselves to the cultivation of literature, found, amid the bustle of war, little to encourage them, and much to dishearten and depress. Still, in these unfavorable circumstances, President Stiles entered on the duties of his station with resolution and zeal; succeeded in restoring order to the college, as far as the times would allow, and, by engaging in the business of instruction beyond what was required of him, and by a deportment marked with dignity and courtesy, soon gained the confidence and respect of the students.

While the war continued, the numerous embarrassments consequent on a state of hostilities, were severely felt. In July, 1779, a body of the British troops landed in the neighborhood of New Haven, marched into the town, and committed various depredations; but the college edifices, through the influence, it is said, of an officer of the detachment, who had been educated within their walls, were uninjured. At this time, President Stiles was active in securing such articles belonging to the college as he thought most exposed to harm; and soon after entered into an unsuccessful correspondence with the British commander at New York for the recovery of the manuscripts of one of his predecessors, which had been carried away in the plunder.

After the peace of 1783, various efforts were

made to induce the legislature of Connecticut to afford such patronage to the college, as to enable it to enlarge its means of instruction, and keep pace with the progress of literature and science ; but all endeavors for this purpose were unavailing. For this there was an apology in the exhausted state of the country, as it came out of the revolutionary contest ; but the principal reason lay in the peculiar relation in which the college stood to the public.

Its establishment was originally the work of the clergy, and the first trustees were all of their order. This for a time was acquiesced in, and perhaps desired ; but as population increased, and with the progress of improvement new interests arose, there was a general conviction, that other classes ought to participate in the control of the highest literary establishment. A portion of the clergy had not improbably at all times been opposed to a change in the college charter, while others were willing that a union should be formed with the civilians, provided there was a prospect of public support to the institution from such a measure ; and with these President Stiles always acted. Advances had been made, at different times, by the legislature, on suggestions of leading members of that body, for placing the college on a new foundation, but never accompanied by any thing beyond promises of

future aid ; while the corporation seem to have supposed, that some present help was necessary, as a pledge of efficient future patronage.

This long controversy was happily terminated in 1792, after the college had existed nearly a century. Several of the principal magistrates in the state government were made *ex officiis* members of the corporation, with all the rights and privileges of the original fellows ; and such an addition was made to the college funds, as greatly to increase its means of usefulness. No one rejoiced in this long-desired union more than President Stiles ; and he considered it, and justly, as the most important event in the affairs of the college during his presidency.

At the time he came into office, very little addition, for more than a quarter of a century, had been made to the philosophical apparatus belonging to the college. In 1789, the Reverend Dr. Lockwood, one of the fellows, gave a sum of money to be expended in this department ; which sum was increased by the subscriptions of others. This money was advantageously laid out in London, under the direction of Dr. Richard Price, whom President Stiles had requested to superintend the purchases. On the arrival of the apparatus, President Stiles petitioned Congress to remit the duties. This petition was presented by Roger Sherman, at that

time a member of the House of Representatives, and it was granted. From that time, all philosophical apparatus has been admitted into the country free from impost.

In the system of instruction, some changes were made, while Dr. Stiles was at the head of the college. He was too great an admirer of Oriental literature, and had made too great proficiency in this branch of study, not to wish it to have a more prominent place in the college course, than it had before held. He accordingly himself taught such students in Hebrew, as wished to acquire a knowledge of this language, and had always a class or classes in this department. To his lectures on ecclesiastical history, some on Oriental learning were added. Lectures on other subjects he read occasionally. The senior class he instructed in metaphysics and moral philosophy. Some improvements in the course of study were made also, by the introduction of new text-books.

But from the time that Dr. Stiles came into the presidency, in 1778, to his death, in 1795, the condition of the country was peculiarly unfavorable to the quiet so essential to the successful prosecution of academical pursuits. While the war of the revolution continued, agitation and alarm pervaded all classes; and after peace was concluded, tranquillity by no means returned.

All kinds of business were depressed ; the restraints of government were released ; and there was a universal anxiety respecting the future. The excitement attending the formation of a new general government soon followed ; the commencement of the French revolution added greatly to the previous causes of dissatisfaction with all existing establishments ; and very many, especially the young, were carried away with the imagination, that the wisdom of the past was of little value. To have not only preserved the college from declension at such a time, but to have carried it forward in the line of improvement, reflects much honor on all those, who in any way controlled its concerns.

At the time President Stiles was inducted into office, there had been, for several years, owing to the disordered state of the country, no public commencement at the college. Degrees had been conferred privately on the candidates for literary honors. For the same reason, this practice was continued till 1781, when the commencement was again publicly celebrated. On this occasion, the first of the kind in his presidency, Dr. Stiles introduced the exercises of the morning with a Hebrew, and of the afternoon, with a Latin address. It may be here added, that fondness for some academical display was one of his striking charac-



teristics. This appeared in the direction he gave to the public performances of the students, and from his own readiness to come forward, on any important occasion, as the orator of the institution. At the commencement in 1792, the first after the union of the civilians with the clergy in the board of fellows, he pronounced from the desk a Latin oration on an event so interesting to his feelings, and which he believed to be fraught with such lasting benefits to the college. The superlatives of the Roman language, at this time, were laid under very heavy contribution. In his discourse at the funeral of the Reverend Dr. Samuel Wales, professor of divinity, in 1792, he announced his text in the original Hebrew,\* and the discourse itself was in Latin; the last exhibition of the kind probably in New England.

As additional illustrations of the same propensity, it may be mentioned, that when, in 1783, the degree of doctor of divinity was conferred on the Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith, professor of theology in the College of New Jersey, as Mr. Smith was present, it appeared to Dr. Stiles a proper occasion to depart from the customary mode of publishing

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\* 1 Sam. xxv. 1. "*And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah.*"



such an honor ; which hitherto had been a mere announcement from the desk. It was arranged that Mr. Smith himself should appear upon the stage ; and some of the forms of European universities were adopted. The ceremony was somewhat imposing, and tolerably successful, except that the candidate seemed not to have well studied his part ; and the consequent embarrassment created some diversion in the audience. The same formalities were observed in conferring a doctor's degree on the Reverend Samuel Wales, after he had been elected professor of divinity. The old collegiate customs and manners also found an advocate in Dr. Stiles ; and he was much inclined to maintain them unimpaired. Of these some were undoubtedly useful, others had outlived their proper age, and of others it is difficult to say, why any importance ever should have been attached to them. But in his ordinary social intercourse, and aside from what may be considered official, no man was more remote from useless formality and ceremony than President Stiles.

## CHAPTER V.

*His Discourse on the Peace of 1783. — Letter to Sir William Jones on the Jews in India. — His Treatise on three of King Charles's Judges. — Promotes the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and Missionary Enterprises. — His Death. — His Character, as delineated by Dr. Channing and Chancellor Kent.*

IN May, 1783, he was invited by Governor Trumbull to deliver the annual sermon at Hartford before the legislature of Connecticut, on the day of the general election. The conclusion of the war, by the acknowledgment of the independence of the United States by the King of Great Britain, had but lately been made known in America, and the whole country was filled with demonstrations of joy. To have passed, after a struggle of only eight years, (for actual hostilities lasted about this time,) from a state of colonial subjection to independent national existence, was an event of such magnitudè, as to fill the minds of all with wonder and astonishment. How much remained to be accomplished, before a firm and efficient government could be organized, and the public prosperity secured, and what difficulties and dangers were

to be encountered before arriving at this consummation, was at first but indistinctly seen. All were disposed to indulge in exultation for the past, and in pleasing anticipations of the future.

From the confidence with which President Stiles, even at the beginning of the revolutionary contest, had foretold the success of the colonies, it need not excite surprise, that he united heartily in the general rejoicing. His most ardent wishes and expectations had been fully met. Accordingly, in his election sermon, he gave full scope to his feelings, and poured forth facts, reasonings, and prophecies, on a variety of topics, in extraordinary profusion. This performance should not be examined and judged by the ordinary rules of criticism. Undoubtedly the author endeavored to bring too much into the space allowed him; but, admitting the want of unity and of methodical arrangement in this sermon, and its occasional violations of good taste, it must still be allowed to be a treasury of valuable facts in the civil and ecclesiastical concerns of the country, and of able suggestions respecting numerous topics relating to public policy. Of the ardent patriotism of the author, of his zeal for civil and religious liberty, and of his high estimation of the services of those, who put every thing at hazard to achieve the independence of their country, he

has left no room to doubt. An edition of this discourse, on large paper and type, and in a splendid style of execution, was published in London. It was reprinted there as a literary curiosity.

President Stiles was, in his habits and taste, a thorough antiquarian. Whatever he supposed connected with the history and literature of the Oriental nations, and especially of the Jews, called forth his enthusiasm. He believed that the remains of the ten tribes of Israel might be found in the interior of Asia. Mention has already been made of some of his early efforts to obtain information of the state of Palestine and the neighboring countries. The travels of Niebuhr and of others who had visited the East, and whatever had been published by the English of the history, antiquities, and customs of India, he had read with great satisfaction.

From the labors of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta he had formed the highest expectations. Having read the first two volumes of their publications, he addressed, in January, 1794, a letter to Sir William Jones, president of the society, respecting Indian history and antiquities. Among other subjects of investigation, he suggested the inquiry, as important, whether the Jews of Cochin had a copy of the Pentateuch, and assigned various reasons for the belief, that

they had such a copy. The letter was directed to the care of Suetonius Heatly, Chief Judge of Appeals at Decca, in Bengal, a gentleman with whom the president had a previous acquaintance. When this letter reached India, both Mr. Heatly and Sir William Jones were dead. The letter, however, was forwarded to the president of the society, Sir John Shore, who caused it to be read at the first meeting after it had been received. The administrator of Mr. Heatly's estate, Mr. Anthony Lambert, replied to President Stiles; but the letter was not received in New Haven till after his death.

In this letter assurances were given, that inquiries would be made at Cochin and Cranganore, and that the president of the society would communicate the result of them. But nothing effectual was done till 1806, when the Reverend Claudius Buchanan, under the auspices of the Marquis Wellesley, visited that part of India, and the opinion of Dr. Stiles was confirmed. A copy of the Hebrew Pentateuch, of high antiquity, was found in the record-chest of one of the synagogues of the black Jews, in the interior of Melayala. This manuscript was brought to England, and collated at Cambridge by the Reverend Thomas Yeates; and the collation was published at the university press, in 1812. The manuscript did not furnish any new readings of

much importance ; but from this circumstance may be derived an argument for the integrity of the common Hebrew text.

But if there was any portion of the wide field of historical inquiry, which it was the delight of Dr. Stiles to cultivate, it was the early history of New England. Of the character of the early colonists he always expressed high admiration. Soon after his settlement at Newport, he began to collect materials for a history of the New England churches, and had made some progress in such a work ; but, the war of the revolution coming on, he was obliged to discontinue it ; and he was not so situated afterwards, as to make its resumption convenient.

But an incident in New England history, altogether suited to his taste, occupied his attention towards the close of his life. This was the residence in the northern colonies of three of the judges of King Charles the First ; Whalley, Goffe, and Dixwell. The facts respecting the wanderings of these fugitives, their deaths, and the places of their burial, he collected, so far as they could be ascertained, with great zeal and care, and embodied the result of his inquiries in a volume, which was published soon after his death. But the time had passed by for fully ascertaining all which might gratify the curiosity of the antiquary. .

That Dixwell resided many years in New Haven, where he married, had a family, and was known as James Davids, there is no doubt. His secret was revealed to several persons during his life ; and, at his death, his will disclosed his true name. He died in New Haven, March, 1688-9, in the eighty-second year of his age. A plain stone, now much mutilated, bearing the initials J. D., still marks the place of his burial. The monuments, which are sometimes pointed out as those of Whalley and Goffe, not improbably belong to other persons. That these two regicides, however, soon after their arrival in New England, were secreted in New Haven, and in some of the towns in the vicinity, there is abundant evidence. Several of their hiding-places are known from undoubted tradition. The most noted of these is three or four miles from New Haven, and is usually called the "Judges' Cave." It is situated on a lofty eminence called West Rock, a retired and wild spot, and somewhat difficult of access, and not ill chosen for the purpose of concealment. The inscription now read on one of the rocks, "*Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God,*" and which has been erroneously reported as the work of the judges, is of late date. The individual, who, under the influence of the *genius loci*, engraved these words on one of the crags, is still living.



In connection with the history of the three judges is a formal defence of their vote for the death of Charles the First, and a panegyric on Cromwell. At the beginning of the French revolution, President Stiles had indulged in rather extravagant expectations of early changes in favor of popular liberty throughout Europe; but he lived long enough to see, that he was less qualified to judge of the progress of events on the eastern continent than in his own country. A great melioration, however, as he considered it, in European government and society, he put off only to a later period. "The confidence," says he, "and tenacious firmness, even to blinded obstinacy, of the present hereditary aristocracies of Europe, and in England among other powers, will never give way. They expect to stand, but they will assuredly fall. The pontiff and conclave, at the reformation, had no doubt but that they should insidiously compass and effect a reunion and re-subjugation of the Protestants; but two centuries and a half have elapsed without any other effect than a conviction, now generated and diffused through Europe, and the court of Rome itself, that the hierarchy is ruined, and the pontificate is no more. The ethnical worship was ages in dying; nor did the Gentile priesthood, nor the civil powers of the three first centuries, believe that



their opulent and pompous idolatry was fatally struck with a death-wound in the apostolic age ; and yet it fell, not by arms, but before the convictions of Christianity in the fifth and succeeding centuries. When established systems arrive at a certain height of corruption, they become incurable ; the experience of all ages shows that they cannot be reformed, and their fall and extirpation become inevitable, in the natural course of events."

In a "*Conspectus of a Perfect Polity*," the author has given the outlines of the constitution of a commonwealth, agreeing, in its great principles, with those of the constitution of the United States, and of the individual states. But he maintains that "a Christian state ought expressly to acknowledge and embosom, in its civil constitution, the public avowal of the being of a God," and "the avowal of Christianity."

In 1790, a society was formed in Connecticut for the abolition of slavery, of which society Dr. Stiles was elected president. As this association did not extend its operations beyond Connecticut, when such laws had been enacted by the legislature as secured, in that state, an early termination of all involuntary servitude, the society was dissolved. It has been before mentioned, that Dr. Stiles, at an early period of his residence at Newport, had strong doubts of the

justice of the slave trade. These doubts soon gave place to the firm conviction that both the slave trade and the holding of slaves were indefensible. Accordingly, his African boy Newport, whom he purchased soon after he removed to Rhode Island, he set at liberty; having, previously, carefully instructed him in elementary learning, and especially in the knowledge of Christianity. When Dr. Stiles came to New Haven, this boy followed him, and became a hired servant in his family, and exhibited, through life, a bright example of industry, honesty, and Christian piety.

In 1791, President Stiles attended, as a delegate of the General Association of Connecticut, a convention, held in New Haven, for establishing rules of intercourse with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States. He was likewise active in the formation of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, one great object of which was to send well-qualified preachers into the new settlements at the north and west.

Though naturally of a feeble constitution, yet, by proper care of his health, he had been seldom interrupted by sickness in any of his pursuits. He was engaged, with undiminished zeal and activity, in the concerns of the college, and in whatever he supposed connected with the pro-

motion of literature and religion, when, on the 8th of May, 1795, he was seized with a bilious fever, of so putrid a tendency as to baffle every medical attempt to check its progress. "In the first stage of his illness," says Dr. Holmes, "he expressed an awful apprehension of the divine tribunal." "But his hopes of heaven brightened, as he approached the valley of the shadow of death." "His extreme debility, though it did not, apparently, enervate his mind, incapacitated him for much conversation." At four in the afternoon, on the 12th, he took an affecting leave of his family, and, "with a sublime calmness in death, becoming the exalted piety of his life, he closed his eyes, and expired at half an hour after eight in the evening." His funeral was attended, with every mark of respect, on the 14th; and a funeral oration on his life and character was pronounced, at the following commencement, by Professor Meigs.

President Stiles was twice married. His first wife was Elizabeth Hubbard, daughter of Colonel John Hubbard, of New Haven, "a woman," says Dr. Holmes, "of excellent accomplishments, intellectual, moral, and religious." She died in Newport, 1775. He had two sons and six daughters. His elder son, Ezra, was graduated at Harvard College in 1778, and entered the legal profession with fair prospects of success. He

died in 1784, near Edenton, in North Carolina. His second son, Isaac, graduated at Yale College in 1783, and was lost at sea. In 1784, President Stiles was married to his second wife, Mrs. Mary Checkley, of Providence, Rhode Island, who survived him.

As a theologian, he was disposed rather to ascertain and dwell upon the points about which Christians agree, than those about which they differ. His system was that of "orthodoxy and charity." In his address to his Newport church and congregation, on resigning his pastoral charge, he enumerates the common articles of the orthodox faith as constituting his own creed, and asserts his conviction, that this has been the religious system of the great majority of the church from the earliest periods of Christianity. He adds, "The church is corrupt, but, God be thanked, the precious truth is preserved in purity in the Holy Scriptures, and, though involved in impure mixtures, yet subsists in the church universal. This, with the piety connected with it, is the foundation of an extensive charity, catholicism, and universal benevolence towards all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth." He had a great dislike of religious controversy; and though sometimes attacked with bitterness, he made no reply.

As a scholar, President Stiles was familiar with

every department of learning. His literary curiosity was never satisfied ; and his zeal in acquiring and communicating knowledge continued unabated to the last. He was distinguished for his knowledge of history, particularly the history of the church. His extensive acquaintance with languages has already been referred to. The Latin language he read, wrote, and spoke with great facility ; but it is obvious, both from his manuscript and printed discourses in that language, that he never was attentive to minute accuracy. The modern languages he neglected till late in life. A few years before his death, he paid some attention to the French language, and soon read it with ease. Of passing events he was a careful observer, and noted in his diary such occurrences as he thought most important. Much that he has recorded, in this way, of the progress of the American revolution, is of high value to the historian. He was likewise particular in noticing whatever came to his knowledge in the department of the sciences. His thermometrical and meteorological observations were extensive and exact. Indeed, it would be difficult to mention any subject of moment in which he did not, as occasions occurred, take an active interest. Perhaps his studies were too much diversified for great results. But it should be remembered, that at the time he commenced a

studious life, and, indeed, to the year of his death, there were few or no facilities for publishing, except what was occasional or controversial. His talents were of such a kind, that at other times, and in some other countries, he would have rivalled the most prolific in the productions of the press.

The late Dr. Channing, who was a native of Newport, in a sermon delivered in that town in 1836, after speaking of the Reverend Mr. Callender, thus refers to President Stiles.

“Another noble friend of religious liberty threw a lustre on this island immediately before the revolution. I mean the Reverend Dr. Stiles, pastor of the Second Congregational church, and afterwards president of Yale College. This country has not perhaps produced a more learned man. To an enlarged acquaintance with physical science he added extensive researches into philology, history, and antiquity; nor did his indefatigable mind suffer any opportunity to escape him of adding to his rich treasures of knowledge. His virtues were proportioned to his intellectual acquisition. I can well remember how his name was cherished among his parishioners, after years of separation. His visit to this place was to many a festival. When little more than a child, I was present at some of his private meetings with the more religious part of his former congregation;

and I recollect how I was moved by the tears and expressive looks with which his affectionate exhortations were received. In his faith he was what was called a moderate Calvinist; but his heart was of no sect. He carried into his religion the spirit of liberty which then stirred the whole country. Intolerance, church tyranny, in all its forms, he abhorred. He respected the right of private judgment, where others would have thought themselves authorized to restrain it.

“A young man, to whom he had been a father, one day communicated to him doubts concerning the Trinity. He expressed his sorrow, but mildly, and with undiminished affection, told him to go to the Scriptures, and to seek his faith there, and only there. His friendships were confined to no parties. He desired to heal the wounds of the divided church of Christ, not by a common creed, but by the spirit of love. He wished to break every yoke, civil and ecclesiastical, from men's necks. To the influence of this distinguished man in the circle in which I was brought up, I may owe in part the indignation which I feel towards every invasion of human rights. In my earliest years, I regarded no human being with equal reverence. I have his form before me at this moment almost as distinctly as if I had seen him yesterday; so strong is the impression made on the child through the moral affections.”



This delineation of Dr. Stiles's character is in the main so just, that it would be wrong not to adopt it here. Dr. Channing was in infancy baptized by Dr. Stiles ; and his parents are supposed to have belonged to his congregation.

In a note to the same sermon, where there is mention of the strong opposition made to the slave trade and slavery by the Reverend Dr. Hopkins, pastor of the First Congregational church in Newport, it is said, "Much as he disapproved of the moderate theology of Dr. Stiles, he cheerfully coöperated with him in this work. Their names were joined to a circular for obtaining funds to educate Africans as missionaries to their own country. These two eminent men, who, as I think, held no ministerial intercourse, forgot their differences in their zeal for freedom and humanity." The project here referred to, of sending native Africans as Christian missionaries to their own country, was formed in 1773 ; and two negroes, *Quaumino* and *Yamma*, both members of Dr. Hopkins's church, were selected and put on a course of education. Objections were made, that these intended missionaries were too much under the influence of Dr. Hopkins, whose theological system was spoken of, in this connection, as no better than paganism. For this or some other reason, the two Africans were sent, in 1774, to Princeton, New Jersey, to com-



plete their preparatory studies under the superintendence of Dr. Witherspoon. But as the war of the revolution soon broke out, the design of this mission was abandoned.

The supposition, that Dr. Hopkins and Dr. Stiles "held no ministerial intercourse," is incorrect. There may not have been, at all times, the utmost harmony of opinion and feeling between the two churches; yet it appears, from Dr. Stiles's journal, that their pastors preached in each other's pulpits; and on one occasion, when Dr. Hopkins was absent from Newport, Dr. Stiles, at his request, administered the communion to both churches assembled together for this purpose. Dr. Stiles's own account of his intercourse with Dr. Hopkins is as follows. Dr. Hopkins held "some sentiments very different from mine, while we agreed well in the general system of orthodoxy. As the providence of God had brought us into connection, I determined to learn and get all the good I could from him, treat him with respect and benevolence, and endeavor, as far as we were agreed, to coöperate with him in building up the Redeemer's kingdom; and we lived together in peace and love."

It would be unjust to the memory of President Stiles not to repeat here, in closing, the remarks on his character by Chancellor Kent, in his

oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society in New Haven, at the commencement in 1831. "President Stiles's zeal for civil and religious liberty," says the Chancellor, "was kindled at the altar of the English and New England Puritans, and it was animating and vivid. A more constant and devoted friend to the revolution and independence of this country never existed. He had anticipated it as early as the year 1760; and his whole soul was enlisted in favor of every measure, which led on gradually to the formation and establishment of the American Union. The frequent appeals which he was accustomed to make to the heads and hearts of his pupils concerning the slippery paths of youth, the grave duties of life, the responsibilities of men, and the perils, and hopes, and honors, and destiny of our country, will never be forgotten by those who heard them, and especially when he came to touch, as he often did, with a 'master's hand and prophet's fire,' on the bright vision of the future prosperity and splendor of the United States.

"Take him for all in all, this extraordinary man was undoubtedly one of the purest and best-gifted men of his age. In addition to his other eminent attainments, he was clothed with humility, with tenderness of heart, with disinterested kindness, and with the most artless simplicity. He was

distinguished for the dignity of his deportment, the politeness of his address, and the urbanity of his manners. Though he was uncompromising in his belief and vindication of the great fundamental doctrines of the Protestant faith, he was nevertheless of the most charitable and catholic temper, resulting equally from the benevolence of his disposition and the spirit of the gospel."



L I F E  
OF  
JOHN FITCH;  
BY  
CHARLES WHITTLESEY.

VOL. VI.

6



## P R E F A C E .

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IN composing the following sketch of an eminent inventor, whose name has long remained in obscurity, much difficulty has occurred, not in the deficiency, but in the selection, of the materials. It was often a matter of doubt, whether personal incidents, of which there are many capable of giving a romantic interest to the work, or statistical truth, should be sacrificed.

The details of Mr. Fitch's captivity and sufferings, while a prisoner among the north-western Indians, have been made to yield to a more full examination of his experiments upon steam engines and steamboats. The writer could not divest himself of the idea, that he was under an obligation to do justice to the memory of the inventor, superior to that of amusing his readers. He is aware that much sensibility is felt among the representatives and friends of different American claimants for the honor of introducing improvements in the use of steam. The investigations of the author have led him

to give the subject of this memoir a conspicuous place in that shining rank of illustrious mechanics. In doing this, he has endeavored to avoid assuming the position of a controvertist; and if there are statements and conclusions at variance with long-settled opinions, they result from the facts themselves, which justice requires should be boldly spoken. In coming to this conclusion, he has sifted the evidence with care; and, although it is too much to suppose that errors may not have crept in, he has confidence that they will not be found numerous.

There may be readers, or, perhaps, relatives and descendants, who will think that too much freedom has been used with the private character and disposition of Mr. Fitch. Such individuals will reflect that most of his domestic life is drawn from manuscripts in his own hand-writing, given to the public, and remarkable for the unguarded nature of the expressions used. With him, concealment of his feelings appears to have been unknown. It would be unpardonable in me not to acknowledge here my obligation to Mr. John Watson, of Germantown, Pennsylvania, for his assistance in collecting the facts for this work.



# JOHN FITCH.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *Introduction.*

THE steam engine has produced such magnificent results in our day, that the history of its inventors and improvers is regarded with extreme interest. No single individual appears to have been endowed with the mechanical ability to invent and construct a perfect machine of this kind. It was an achievement of such magnitude, that it required the lapse of centuries to bring it to its present state of perfection. It was an instrument of such vast utility, that the introduction of only a single improvement has been sufficient to place the name of the improver on the list of illustrious inventors.

One of the most astonishing consequences, which followed the perfection of the engine, was its application to water-craft. Here, as in the case of the great invention itself, the develop-

ment was gradual and sublime. The inventive genius of three nations labored upon it half a century. The English claim, and with apparent justice, that a citizen of that realm, by the name of Jonathan Hulls, conceived the first idea of a boat to be moved by the power of steam. In the year 1737, this individual published a pamphlet, describing a method of "moving vessels in a calm, or with or against wind and tide." Mr. Hulls obtained a patent; and its specifications describe a vessel, with wheels suspended at each quarter, and moved, in an experimental way, by animal power. He refers to the atmospheric engine, sometimes called the steam engine, as capable, if properly applied, of driving the vessel with great force. We find no evidence that the application was made; and the English nation slept upon the suggestion, until the generation of Hulls had passed away.\*

Sixteen years later, the French Academy received a communication from John Bernoulli, showing how steam might be applied to the

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\* The Spaniards claim the invention of a steamboat by a countryman of theirs, Blasco de Garay, who exhibited it, in successful operation, at Barcelona, in 1543, as testified by the records in the royal archives at Simancas. See Navarrete's *Collecion de los Viages y Descubrimientos*, Tom. I. Introduc. p. 126. — *North American Review*, Vol. XXIII. p. 488. — *Library of Am. Biog.* Vol. X. p. 37.

propulsion of vessels. His plan involved the use of a pump, by which water, raised through the keel to a considerable height, and conducted through the stern in a tube, would produce reaction and motion. In 1759, a French citizen, by the name of Genevois, undertook the construction of a steamboat. His project was an imitation of the action of the foot of a duck in swimming. From causes now apparent, the artificial foot failed to give that motion to his boat, which the natural one does to the aquatic animal.

The Count d'Auxiron, also of France, repeated the experiments of Genevois in the year 1774. In the following year, the elder Perrier turned his thoughts upon the subject. He proposed to introduce the English engines into France, and, having procured the power, to give it an application to navigation. Perrier had an abiding confidence that it might be done; but his scheme and its success are alike unknown. In 1781, the Abbé Arnal avers that he proposed to apply steam, as a motive power, to floating objects.

Next comes the Marquis de Jouffroy, who exhibited a model at Lyons in 1782, and complains that Fulton's boats, as navigated in 1815, were, in substance, the same with his own. During this controversy, Monsieur Frederick Royou,

in a letter dated March 28th, 1816, affirms, that the attempts of Jouffroy were vague, not publicly known, and by no means attended with success. Dr. Franklin was in France at the period of Jouffroy's experiments. On his voyage home, in 1785, Franklin, always engaged in philosophical studies, reviewed the then known systems of gaining motion upon water. He gave his speculations the form of a letter, directed to Monsieur Le Roy, of Paris. Dr. Franklin discusses the plan of circular wheels, turning constantly at the sides of the vessel. He goes further, and notices the scheme of Bernoulli, to be worked as a suck and force pump. He suggests improvements in both methods, but does not appear to have formed a decided opinion as to the results.

In none of his discussions upon the subject do we see a reference to the inventions of Jouffroy. Whatever may have been the value or success of the Marquis's system, the experiments themselves do not appear to have been known to one of the greatest mechanics of the day; as, with his extensive means of information, his fondness for mechanical inventions, and the magnitude of the project, it seems scarcely credible that a successful experiment could have been made in France at that time without his knowledge.

To the old world is undoubtedly due the first conception of the idea of a steamboat. The French nation, at that time the most proficient in natural philosophy, had imported the idea from England, and had labored thirty years to reduce it to practice. But, from the best evidence which has reached us, we conclude, that up to the close of the American revolution, Europe had contended with the elements in vain. No craft moved in opposition to the winds, nor overcame currents of great rivers, which was not propelled by the hand of man. The science of the continent had not penetrated the mysteries, which surrounded the subject of steam navigation.\*

The disclosure of those secrets was reserved for the dismembered empire, lately organized in the new world. It is recorded of Oliver Evans, that he reflected upon the question as early as 1773, but did not exhibit the results of his studies until 1804. His mind was directed to another application of steam ; to the movement of machinery upon land. About the same time, it appears that Mr. Henry, of Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, and Andrew Ellicott, of Maryland, had thought upon the same subject. In June

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\* Congressional Documents ; *Reports of Committees*, 1836-7 ; Vol. II. No. 317. *National Intelligencer*, February 26th, 1839.

or July, 1783, another American, James Rumsey, of Virginia, turned his thoughts to the great project of self-moving vessels.\*

This secluded republican so far perfected his conceptions, that an experiment was made upon a branch of the Potomac River, in the fall of 1784. This was a small model boat and engine of six tons, put in motion secretly, and in the darkness of night. It was constructed upon the plan of a common lifting pump, united with a forcing apparatus; all worked by steam. The funnel, through which the water was ejected, lay along the keel, discharging at the stern. The suction pipe was placed at the bow, and the engine at midships. The force of the discharge gave rise to motion in the boat.† His system, it is apparent, coincides with that of John Bernoulli, amplified by Dr. Franklin. But Franklin had not then written his dissertation; and it is doubtful whether the invention of Bernoulli was received in America. What was well known to our minister at the court of France may never have reached the fireside of an obscure mechanic in Virginia.

Rumsey's experiment gave him so much assurance, that he proceeded to construct another boat upon the same principle, and fifty feet in

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\* Underwood's *Report*, February 6th, 1839.

† Lives of Eminent Mechanics, p. 28.

length, with an engine of one third of a ton, and five gallons of water, and a freight of three tons. He made a public experiment in the year 1786.\* The speed of this vessel is variously stated at from three to four, and from four to five miles an hour.

For want of encouragement and money, Mr. Rumsey passed over to England, and succeeded in building a much larger boat upon the Thames. He had tried a system of setting poles moved by steam, but returned to the original plan of the suck and force pump. His death occurred in 1793, before the London boat was put in motion.

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## CHAPTER II.

*Fitch's Birth and early Years. — Serves an Apprenticeship to a Clock-maker. — Commences Business without Success. — Marriage and domestic Troubles.*

THE preceding condensed view of the early inventors appeared necessary to a proper under-

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\* Underwood's *Report*. — The Virginia Gazette gives the year 1787.



standing of the position occupied by Mr. Fitch. When this remarkable man, disappointed, dejected, and threadbare, withdrew from the scene of his labors, his successes, and his sorrows, to the state of Kentucky, in the year 1796, he deposited a sealed manuscript in the Library of Philadelphia. His directions were positive, that it should not be opened until thirty years after his decease; an injunction which was religiously kept.

Upon breaking the seal, in the year 1828, it was found to be an address to "My children and to future generations," in which the story of his hopes and reverses is most powerfully told. He there asserts, that the subject of land carriages, to be propelled along common roads by steam, took possession of his mind in April, 1785. About one week after, this project was abandoned, and that of water-craft taken up; and respecting this, he observes, "I did not know that there was a steam engine on earth, when I proposed to gain a force by steam. I leave my first drafts and descriptions behind, that you may judge whether I am sincere or not. A short time after drawing my first draft for a boat, I was amazed and chagrined to find at Parson Erwin's, in Bucks county, a drawing of a steam engine; but it had the effect to establish me in my other principles, as my doubts, at that time, lay in the engine only."



The house in which JOHN FITCH was born stood on the line between the townships of Hartford and Windsor, in the state of Connecticut. His birth occurred on the 21st of January, 1743, in the Windsor portion of his father's house. The name of this parent was Joseph, who had three sons, Augustus, Joseph, and the "unfortunate John," and three daughters, Sarah, Chloe, and Anna. Fitch's ancestors were Saxons, who emigrated to Essex, in England, and thence to Windsor. They had a coat of arms, and a vellum of pedigree. John's great grandfather was one of the settlers of his native town. When John arrived at the age of four years, he lost his mother by death. In after life, he sometimes speaks of his father with little reverence; but for his mother he appears to have entertained an intense affection.

He was kept at school until eight years of age, when he was put to regular labor on the farm. From this time, he had only one month each year at school, but endeavored to overcome this misfortune by working hard at Haddery's Arithmetic in the intervals of day-labor. In this way, he had acquired, at the age of nine, a knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and could tell how many minutes there are in ten years.

At the age of eleven, he heard of Salmon's

Geography, a book which was supposed to contain a description of all the world. As his father could not be persuaded to purchase it, after much importunity, he gave John some headlands, at the end of a field, for potatoes. On the day of the spring training, he remained at home, dug up the headland by hand, and planted the seed. The potato patch produced a crop worth ten shillings, with which a merchant undertook to procure the book in New York. The Geography cost twelve shillings, but the merchant gave him credit on the excess, while his father exacted the value of the seed potatoes. From this literary treasure he obtained a full knowledge of the number, location, and religion of the nations of the earth. During the winter, when he was thirteen years of age, he was permitted to attend school five or six weeks, and went through his Arithmetic. The schoolmaster proposed, that he should attend to the subject of surveying; and the father, touched by the earnest entreaties of his son, purchased a pair of dividers and a scale. For this act of liberality, the young scholar exhibited the most heartfelt gratitude.

On the farm, his brother exercised over him an unfeeling tyranny, from which there was no escape. The labors imposed upon him were too severe for his feeble constitution; his books were exhausted; and, as a relief, he imperceptibly re-

sorted to plays with his young companions. This, he says "helped to sweeten life ; and, from the time I was fourteen years of age, until I went apprentice, I enjoyed myself as well as most of the Virginia slaves, who have liberty to go to a dance once a week."

From this extract, it is apparent that unkindness, neglect, and harsh usage, were producing on the disposition of Fitch their legitimate effects. He determined to leave a home, which offered so few of the comforts of a paternal abode. The inhabitants of Windsor had concluded to erect a steeple on the village church, and the day was regarded by all youngsters of the place as one of relaxation and sport. Fitch was now at the age of seventeen, and, with the consent of his father, employed this holiday in a journey to Weathersfield, on the Connecticut River, and engaged on board a sloop bound for New York. In consequence of the brutality of the mate and the captain, who forced him to lie on deck, upon a short chest, he soon transferred himself to a Providence sloop, where his treatment was generous, and his wages good.

Upon his return home, a clock-maker of the vicinity proposed to take him as an apprentice ; a proposition which gave him great joy. His father being very much opposed to this project, the young man exposed his troubles to Mr. Tim-

othy King, the husband of his sister Sarah. The best evidence, that Mr. Fitch was possessed of a mind naturally just and grateful, is to be found in the generous compliments he bestows upon these two friends. "My sister," he writes, "was the most mannerly, generous-spirited woman that I ever saw, not only to me, but to others; and probably might take it, in some measure, from her husband, as good wives endeavor to recommend themselves to their husbands by adopting their sentiments."

The desired situation was obtained at the clock-maker's through their exertions. At the end of a year, the apprentice had been employed so little upon time-pieces, and so much at out-of-doors work, that he made very little progress in the art. He was then transferred to a brother of the first master, who followed the same business. The propensity of his late master appears to have been common to the family; and, at the expiration of eight months' service in the new establishment, he had not seen a watch taken to pieces or put together.

There was another trait in the administration of this watch-maker worthy of record. On ordinary occasions, his apprentice found it difficult to satisfy his appetite before the business of eating was suspended, or the scanty food exhausted. His own representation is, that, "be-

ing an inferior, I was helped last at the table. The females would then discourse upon gluttony ; and my master, hastily devouring his own food, would immediately return thanks for that which himself and others ate, as well as for that which his apprentice did not eat."

At the close of his term, he was unable to prosecute the trade for which he had been intended, for want of instruction in its mysteries. He proceeded to establish a brass foundry, which succeeded very well ; and after this, he engaged in the making of potash, which resulted in a considerable loss. While in the potash business, he was married to Miss Lucy Roberts, on the 28th of December, 1767. This event, instead of promoting the happiness of the parties, proved to be a source of mutual affliction through life. The consequences of this domestic misfortune were so disastrous to the peace of his mind, that a separation took place in less than two years from the marriage. There appears to have been an incompatibility of temper, a difference upon religious questions, and upon schemes of future life, too wide for reconciliation or endurance.

A biographer is an historian, not a eulogist. His undertaking presupposes an ardent desire for truth, which is the line and plummet of history, not the pursuit of partialities or the in-

dulgence of prejudices. The unfortunate circumstances in which Mr. Fitch was reared, had, without doubt, impaired the amiability of his disposition. United with a lady of variable temperament, and unyielding in her purposes, himself possessed of a desire to engage in speculations, and knowing the tenacity of his own opinions, perhaps it cannot be said that his determination to lead a separate life was unwise.

No one can read his letters to his son and daughter, and deny that his heart was warm with paternal affection. The name of the son, the eldest child, was Shaler, and of the daughter, Lucy. Writing from Warminster, Bucks county, Pennsylvania, June 16th, 1781, to this son, he expresses himself as follows. "My darling boy, believe me, when I took you in my arms, and kissed you for the last time, and took my last farewell, you may be assured that I felt every emotion that it is possible for a tender father to feel. How my heart dissolved in tears, and how my sinews wanted strength, I can better feel than express. Be assured, your father loves you, and that there is nothing would make him more happy than to take you under his paternal care."

Between the parents, equally proud and unforgiving, no reconciliation was ever effected. Even these children, their common offspring, to

whom they were strongly attached, were not sufficient to bring together two haughty spirits, so thoroughly estranged. The father anxiously sought to win them to his residence, but to no purpose. His offers to provide for educating and clothing them were rejected. After they were sufficiently advanced to correspond with him, he made liberal provision for them out of his western lands, but without avail, notwithstanding we find him cherishing towards them the highest paternal regard. He justly attributed their prejudices against him to the influences by which they were surrounded, and does not appear to have abated any portion of his original affection. Finally, the two children having arrived at maturity, he entreated them to visit him at Trenton, New Jersey, at his own expense. The daughter, a fine-spirited girl, he had never seen. Their refusal to come to him added new pangs to his accumulated sufferings. He had exhausted every scheme but that of forgiveness and return, in order to behold his children. In moments of tenderness, he had gone so far as to propose to forget the past, and receive the mother to his new home; a project which received no attention from the other party, and was never renewed. And still the instinct of the parent was alive towards his children, with whom he held frequent correspond-



ence. His offers of land and property were constantly repeated, and his soul was always agitated with contending passions and emotions.

In December, 1784, he appeals to his son, in terms of touching eloquence, to reconsider the determination to abandon his father. "Heaven forbid that I should endeavor to raise an irreverent thought in your heart against your mother. But our separation, you may be assured, was no trifling matter to me. There was nothing that I more ardently wished for at the time, than that Heaven would call me to the world of spirits. You, my child, staggered every resolution, and weighed more with me than a mountain of diamonds. Finally, I resolved, and re-resolved, and then resolved again; and gave you a sacrifice to the world more unwillingly than the patriarch of old."

To his daughter, December 18th, 1787, he says, "You express a tender regard for your mother, which strongly recommends you to me. Should I be enabled to throw a fortune in your way, and you should neglect your mother, I should think you too base to be my daughter." This daughter married Colonel James Kilbourne, now a resident of Franklin county, Ohio, and the ancestor of a wide-spread circle of descendants.

On the 25th of December, 1792, Mr. Fitch



addressed a feeling letter to his son-in-law, Mr. Kilbourne. "My dear child, know that I am a man of tender feelings, however my children may have been educated to form their opinions of me. No man loves his children better than myself, although I never saw but one. Forgive me for not entering into a justification of my conduct; but esteem your mother-in-law and myself as we have both merited; but I require of you, that you treat her kindly, because she was once the wife of John Fitch. But much as I love my children, any mediation through them would be ineffectual."

The overruling influence, which these domestic troubles had upon the life and character of Fitch, will be plainly seen as we proceed with his history. A circumstance, which occupied so prominent a place in his thoughts, could not have been passed over with justice to the principal sufferer or to truth. The most instructive lessons of the past are drawn from lives of men of genius, in whose moral temperament the faculty of self-control was weak, or wanting altogether. This episode may be a valuable warning to great minds, showing how many generous, and even noble qualities may be overshadowed by a social fault.

## CHAPTER III.

*Engages in the Business of a Silversmith at Trenton in New Jersey. — His Shop and Property destroyed by the British. — Joins the Army at Valley Forge. — Journey to Kentucky. — Surveys and takes up new Lands. — Skirmish with the Indians. — Taken Prisoner by the Indians, and held for some Time in Captivity. — Redeemed at Detroit by a British Officer. — Goes to Canada. — Returns to Pennsylvania, and constructs a Map of the Western Country.*

MR. FITCH was in his twenty-sixth year, when he abandoned his little homestead, to become a wanderer and an adventurer. He spent some time at Pittsfield, in Massachusetts, and from thence repaired to Albany, in New York. He left Albany, and sought for labor among the farmers between that place and New Jersey ; but his sickly appearance, and absolute destitution, rendered it difficult for him to obtain employment. In this forlorn condition, he resorted to the resources of his native ingenuity for support.

We hear of him at New Brunswick, and afterwards at Trenton, in the state of New Jersey. At one of these places he engaged in the business of making buttons. From this, he returned to

the trade for which he had served as an apprentice with so little success, the occupation of a silversmith. His skill and perseverance soon enabled him to master the difficulties of his calling, and money began to flow into his pockets. When the war of the American revolution commenced, he was well established at Trenton, doing an extensive business. The faculty of acquiring property appears to have been in him as strong, as his disposition to spend it when acquired.

His shop and its contents were estimated at three thousand dollars, when the British army entered the village of Trenton. The troops were attracted to it, because he had large contracts for the repair of American arms. They proceeded to burn the establishment, and destroy the tools and all his visible property.

A body of volunteers were soon after raised by the state of New Jersey. He entered it in the capacity of lieutenant, and proceeded to the cantonment at Valley Forge. When the term of service had expired, it is said he continued the business of repairing arms, and received for his services four thousand dollars of continental paper.

While at the head-quarters of the army, some officers of the Virginia line spoke of the extreme fertility and value of Kentucky lands. They

remarked, that neither the state of Virginia, of which Kentucky then formed a part, nor the owners of land warrants, were able to procure surveyors, who would risk their lives in the location claims. He formed a resolution, at once, to engage in an undertaking which promised free scope to every faculty. In a daring, restless, and ambitious mind, the dangers and emoluments of this service were satisfactory reasons for its adoption. From Valley Forge he retired to the town of Warminster, in the county of Bucks, Pennsylvania. The continental money declined so rapidly in value, that Mr. Fitch was driven to his trade for a livelihood. While preparing for the western surveys, from the sum of four thousand dollars he could realize only one hundred dollars. Having now procured the appointment of deputy surveyor, under the state of Virginia, and collected a few dollars in money, he set out, on foot, in the spring of 1780, for Kentucky.

The western Indians were at this time in close alliance with the British forces. War parties were in possession of the right bank of the Ohio, and were frequently crossing that river to strike the settlements of Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The only safe route was by way of James River Valley and the Cumberland Gap. But, in haste to realize the benefits of the under-

taking, he overlooked personal exposure, and struck the Ohio at Wheeling Island.

A party in boats, conveying cattle and horses, descended the river from that place, and he joined them. At the mouth of the Big Sandy they were fired upon by thirty Indians, who wounded two of the men. Fourteen of the horses and two cows were wounded, and one cow was killed.

The records of public surveys show that he arrived during the season, and took up his lands between the Kentucky and Green Rivers. While in the care of the village schoolmaster, at Windsor, he had the honor to assist the governor of the colony in measuring a tract of land. This is probably all the practical field-work he had done before commencing the Kentucky surveys. But his mathematical bias, and skill as a manipulator, rendered the art of surveying easy to him.

With what success this business was prosecuted, we may judge from the fact, that in 1781 he returned to Philadelphia, the owner of one thousand six hundred acres of choice land, on the waters of Salt River, near the present village of Bardstown, in the county of Nelson. At this period we find him indulging in high expectations of the future. The rare fortune opening to his view, at the west, dispelled the gloom of other misfortunes, and with sanguine hopes another

expedition was planned. It was then he urged his son Shaler to join him in the occupation of his western lands, and proposed to give two hundred acres to any person who would bring him out, as soon as there should be peace in the states.

Before departing for Kentucky, he made a will, in which the daughter was particularly remembered. With the available funds at his command, amounting to about one hundred and fifty pounds, he repaired to Pittsburg, purchased a cargo of flour and groceries, and prepared to descend the Ohio to New Orleans. The successes of the American arms had partially repelled the Indian tribes on the Ohio, and the more daring of the emigrants ventured to take the river route. Fitch and his little company committed themselves to its current, on the 18th of March, 1782, shortly after the massacre of the Christian Indians on the Muskingum. The flotilla passed safely along, until it approached the mouth of the latter stream, where the city of Marietta now stands. Here the company was assaulted by Indians under Captain Buffalo. Two were killed and nine reserved for captivity. The prisoners were loaded with their own property, and the flour which could not be carried away was scattered along the shore. The details of their suf-

ferings do not differ materially from those which are so common in western history.

Mr. Fitch had now arrived at that period of life when the physical constitution attains its full strength ; and his habits of endurance had been such, as to give him bodily powers equal to those of his captors. With them he was subjected to the usual rigors of Indian slavery, of which a system of initiatory cruelty formed a part. He was compelled to run the gantlet, and to go bareheaded from place to place. His activity on foot recommended him to them as a hunter, and his capacity as a manufacturer of rude trinkets procured him the good will of the chiefs and their women. He was passed from owner to owner, and from tribe to tribe, in exchange for skins ; performing, according to his own estimate, a journey of twelve hundred miles through the north-western territory.

His treatment, however, after the first course of starvation, toil, and abuse was past, was more gentle than that of prisoners among savages in general. In addition to the geographical information, which he obtained from actual observation during this captivity, he succeeded in drawing from the Indians a description of the principal rivers of the west ; of the form, position, and magnitude of the northern lakes. It should be remembered that, as yet, no surveys had been



made north of the Ohio and west of Pennsylvania. In this forlorn condition, his inquisitive mind employed itself in tracing the various rivers, whose future consequence he at once foresaw, to their numerous sources. No traveller takes closer observations upon the topography of a country than a western Indian. He can mark out upon the ground a rude map of every lake and river along which the print of his mocason has been made. His memory in regard to places never fails. From the most intelligent chiefs and warriors, Fitch obtained rough outlines of that broad domain which to him appeared to be the principal seat of empire. He was heard afterwards to remark, that, in one century, the west would be the centre, and the Atlantic states the suburbs, of the nation. One half of that period is past, and the balance of power is already inclining westward across the Alleghany Ridge.

By means of knowledge thus obtained, Mr. Fitch, on his return, constructed a map, embracing the country from the Lake of the Woods to the mouth of the Ohio, on which the principal rivers are laid down and their names given. This map was drawn, engraved, and worked off by himself, in the workshop of a friend at Warminster, in the year 1786. The impressions were taken on a cider-press, and



appear to have had a rapid sale. The general positions of the great lakes and rivers are given with surprising accuracy, when we regard the circumstances under which it was made. Lake Superior appears somewhat magnified to the north and east; but the outlines of Lakes Huron, Erie, and Michigan bear a striking resemblance to more modern representations.

The extent of his personal acquaintance with the country may be inferred from some remarks engraved upon the map. For instance; "The lands on this Lake [Erie] are generally thin and swampy, but will make good pasture and meadow lands." "From Fort Lawrance, and thence by the mouth of the Scioto a westerly course to the Illinois, is generally a rich, level country, abounding with living springs and navigable waters, the air pure, the climate moderate." "This country [Illinois] has once been settled by a people more expert in war than the present inhabitants. Regular fortifications, and some of these incredibly large, are to be found; also many graves, or towers, like pyramids of earth." In forming the map, he acknowledges his indebtedness to the labors of Thomas Hutchins, Geographer of the United States, and to William McMurray.

His captivity was finally terminated in October of the same year, by purchase from his

Indian master. This was effected by a British officer at Detroit, and thus he became a prisoner of war. In this character, he was sent through Canada to Prison Island, forty-five miles from Montreal, where he was exchanged, and returned to the United States by sea in the winter of 1782-3. During his detention among the British, even in the most dismal circumstances, his industry never ceased. He was enabled, by working various metals into ornaments suitable for the Indian trade, to accumulate several hundred dollars, with which to meet the expenses of his ransom and return. His person is represented, at this time, as straight, tall, and imposing; his eyes, hair, and complexion, very dark; his gait rapid, his arms swinging to and fro as he walked. In fact, he had nearly acquired the external characters of an Indian. Like him, in travelling, he planted his feet straight with the path, so that, with moccasins, the red man himself could not distinguish the track from one of his own race.

In the year 1784, another contract was made by Mr. Fitch with a company of gentlemen, by which he agreed to survey one hundred thousand acres of land in the Indian Country, as the right bank of the Ohio was then called. For this service, he was to receive one seventh part, and for the next one hundred thousand

acres one eighth. During his absence from Kentucky, his land entries had been encroached upon by unauthorized settlers. He spent the winter of 1784-5 at Warminster, probably engaged as a watch-maker.

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## CHAPTER IV.

*Fitch conceives the Project of a Steamboat. — Petitions Congress on the Subject, also several of the State Assemblies. — Rumsey. — Fitch obtains a Statute in his Favor from the Legislature of New Jersey. — A Company is formed to carry his Plans into Execution. — Description of his Steamboat.*

WE have now traced the course of this child of misfortune, through many vicissitudes, down to the eve of his great undertaking, the *application of steam power to water-craft*. Having survived an accumulation of sorrows uncommon for his years, he sat down to his bench with the sole desire of procuring a livelihood by daily labor. Returning, one Sunday, from the Neshamony church, the idea, unfortunate to him, but happy for the world, of "gaining a force by

steam," took possession of his thoughts. From the moment this conception entered his mind, it became the absorbing passion of his soul. By the 29th of August, 1785, he had so far matured his plans, as to present the subject to the Continental Congress. He thought it impossible for Congress to view the matter in a different light from himself, and expected they would at once vote him money to carry on the experiment. The new value which the public lands of the west would acquire, when a steamboat should be able to ascend the Mississippi and its branches, appeared to his ardent mind an object so immense and certain, that a refusal did not enter into his calculations.

Accompanying the petition were numerous letters and recommendations from eminent men. Mr. John Ewing, who had examined the model, said, "The application of steam force, to turn a wheel in the water, seems easy and natural by the machine which he proposes." William C. Huston, writing to Lambert Cadwallader, a member of Congress, remarks, "I cannot help approving the simplicity of the plan. The person who offers it, you know, is a man highly deserving, modest, ingenious, and of good morals." Dr. Samuel Smith writes to Mr. Read, August 27th, 1785, "The bearer, Mr. Fitch, has shown me the model of an instrument to row a boat

against streams, which appears to me to be constructed on just philosophical principles." The petition was received, and referred to Messrs. Read, King, and Henry, as a special committee, who did not even report upon its contents.

Exasperated by what appeared to him the greatest stupidity on the part of his own government, Mr. Fitch made representations to the Spanish minister, who received him with great courtesy. This meeting resulted in nothing substantial; and the inventor, chagrined and excited, determined to make the effort alone. To accomplish an object apparently so much beyond his means, he set out for Kentucky, with a view to place his lands there in a condition to make them available. On the way to Virginia, he had the mortification to find, that Mr. Henry, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, had also thought of moving vessels "by a steam wheel," but had never made his views public.

Proceeding to Fredericktown, he met Governor Johnson, who was so much delighted with the scheme, that he advised an immediate call upon the legislature, and recommended a visit to General Washington. He found the General preoccupied with a plan of Mr. Rumsey's, by whom he had been consulted, and to whom he was in some manner pledged.

At Richmond, Mr. Madison brought the at-

tention of the House of Burgesses to the subject, and was appointed one of the committee to whom Fitch's petition was referred. Patrick Henry also took a deep interest in the scheme, on account of its novelty and importance, and went so far as to draw up a paper and procure one hundred and fifteen subscribers to the map of the Indian Country.\* The success of this map was such, as to cause him to abandon the journey to Kentucky, relying upon the proceeds to carry forward his steamboat adventure. While the legislature of Virginia deliberated upon the affair, he returned to that of Pennsylvania, and, laying the whole before that body, procured a

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\* The agreement or subscription for the map is in the following words. "Whereas, John Fitch, of Bucks county, Pennsylvania, has proposed a *machine* for promoting navigation, with other useful purposes, which has been generally approved by all men of science who have examined the same; in order to enable the said Fitch to make a full experiment of the utility of the said *machine*, we, the subscribers, being willing to promote so laudable an undertaking, do promise to pay said Fitch or order the sums against our respective names, provided said Fitch shall have, ready to be delivered to us at — by the — day of — next, so many of his maps of the north-western parts of the United States, as shall answer to the sums subscribed by us, at the rate of a French crown per map.

"N. B. Said Fitch pledges his word that one half the money shall be applied towards making the experiment above proposed."

favorable report. From thence he repaired to Annapolis, and presented a petition to the General Assembly of Maryland, praying for money to procure an engine from England. Here he received a favorable report, but no money. The Assembly of the state of Delaware was next visited, with the same result.

The inventive genius of the United States appears to have been simultaneously directed to the subject of steam in its various applications. This infant nation, in a state of political chaos, without order or strength, without science or institutions, became the theatre of intense speculation upon the greatest problem in the range of natural science. The names of many individuals have come down to us, whose minds were deeply engaged in the project at this time. The most prominent and original were Evans and Rumsey, Franklin and Fitch. The expositions of these men roused the attention of many other eminent mechanics, such as John Stevens, Roosevelt, Fulton, and the younger Stevens, not one of whom is without a share in the glory of the result.

Between Mr. Fitch and Mr. Rumsey a bitter contest arose respecting the priority of their inventions. It appears to have been unknown to these unlettered men in the colonies of America, that the thought of steam navigation had been



long before known and pondered upon in Europe. Intoxicated with the idea that to one or the other of them belonged the honor of giving this immense benefit to mankind, they lived and died in a controversy which added nothing to the reputation of either.

There were also mutual charges of plagiarism, in the plan of a boat, which appear, to an unprejudiced examiner, wholly without foundation. So far as their working models, their drafts, and their machines in actual operation, are known to us, there is very little in common but the name and the object proposed. They were both engaged in perfecting a boat, to move by a power placed within itself; and the initial force was steam. Rumsey's propelling agent was in one case a water engine, in the nature of a forcing-pump; in another, a system of setting poles, planted upon the bottom by the agency of machinery. Fitch wrought by means of an engine attached to wheels, and paddles or oars. The former he abandoned after experiment, and adhered, through life, to the latter. If any plagiarisms occurred, they must have been of minor parts of the engine, or of such arrangements in the boat itself as the other had discarded as impracticable. Their working boats were totally different.

The powers of the old Confederation, then in



existence, do not appear to have embraced that of patents, or the encouragement of arts. It remained with the states to grant monopolies and privileges, according to the usage in England. Mr. Rumsey procured from the legislature of Maryland, his native state, and from Virginia, his adopted home, certain valuable protective rights. Mr. Fitch, we have seen, was engaged in procuring the same encouragement and protection. Leading politicians, who took an interest in a project which promised such splendid results, took different sides in the contest. In March, 1786, Mr. Fitch procured a protective statute from the Assembly of New Jersey, and made an effort to get a similar act in Pennsylvania. A collision between himself and Arthur Donaldson, a person with whom he had been in communication as a partner, delayed the success of this petition. Before the committee, Fitch represented that he had seven different plans, and four different models, one of which Donaldson presented as his own.

By almost incredible exertions, and in opposition to a strong array of influence from other parties, a company of individuals was at length formed to carry out his designs. The subscriptions were filled up in the last week of April, 1786, consisting of forty shares of twenty dollars each, one half to be expended on the ma-

chine, the other to be the property of the inventor.

For the construction of the engine, Mr. John Nancarrow was at first appointed as a superintendent, and afterwards Mr. Harry Voight. Their first working model had a cylinder of one inch in diameter, which proved too small for use, and a second was made, with a diameter of three inches, which was completed in August of the same year. The operation of this miniature engine convinced them, that it might be made to "work both ways," or keep up a continuous motion in the same direction with equal force. It will be borne in mind, that the engine itself was, so far as known in America at this time, little more advanced than steam navigation. Almost every thing was to be invented and constructed. The engine, under the magical touch of Watt, had then but just arrived at a stage of improvement by which it became really useful. His improved patents were procured in 1782 and the year following. Before that time, it had been a curiosity, a plaything, kept among the apparatus of colleges as a harmless wonder, which served to illustrate the fact that steam had a highly expansive force.

Its practical application was rare, awkward, and unprofitable. It had been made to lift water and weights; but the manifold applica-

tions, that instantly followed the alterations of Watt, were as astonishing as they were new. But in England, where the engine was then busily engaged in doing the work of human hands, and exciting the violence of the day laborer, its application to vessels was not known; probably not thought of. John Fitch and Harry Voight could therefore have derived from the old world no ideas of an engine adapted to navigation. They were also unable to procure workmen from that country, or even the assistance of a person who had seen the improved engine of the English factories. The expiration of three years from the time when Watt and Bolton obtained their triumphs in fixed machinery, by the success of balance-wheels, cranks, and condensers, had not been sufficient to introduce all these things into common use in America. A war existed between the two countries; manufactures were here comparatively unknown, communication infrequent, and mutual ill will predominated. After the war, commerce was languid; and numerous other causes existed to prevent the spread of information.

In this state of ignorance respecting the moving force, Mr. Fitch asked the legislature of Pennsylvania for a loan of one hundred and fifty pounds, to procure an engine from England; on which the vote stood, *y*es twenty-

eight, *nays* thirty-two. It became necessary, therefore, to build the engine themselves, and adapt its parts to the new purposes they had in view. The company resolved to undertake the construction of a boat, capable of carrying passengers and freight to the amount of about twenty-five tons. Voight and himself concluded to adopt the system of paddles or oars, in preference to wheels; and Fitch thus expresses his views on this point. The "paddles to be worked by cranks, I now, and ever have esteemed the best way that a boat could be propelled in smooth water, by the strength of men, the force of steam, or any other power." The boat was commenced at Philadelphia, and its construction proceeded with great rapidity, considering how much was to be done, and the inadequacy of means and information that embarrassed the builders. A description of the plan of this craft is given by the inventor, in the *Columbian Magazine* for December, 1786.

"The cylinder is to be horizontal, and the steam to work with equal force at each end. The method by which we obtain a vacuum is, it is believed, entirely new, as is also the method of letting water into it, and throwing it off against the atmosphere without any friction. It is expected that the cylinder, which is twelve inches in diameter, will move, with a clear force, eleven

or twelve hundred weight, after frictions are deducted; this force to be directed against a wheel eighteen inches in diameter. The piston is to move about three feet, and each vibration is to give the axis about forty evolutions. Each evolution of the axis moves twelve oars, or paddles, five and one half feet. They work perpendicularly, and are represented by the strokes of the paddle of a canoe. As six of the paddles are raised from the water, six more are entered; and the two sets of paddles make their strokes of eleven feet at each evolution. The crank of the axis acts upon the paddles, about one third of their length from their lower ends; on which part of the oar the whole force of the axis is applied. The engine is placed in the bottom of the boat, and both action and reaction turn the wheel the same way."

Those who give this description a careful investigation will find in it most of the principles, which constitute the improved steamboat of our day. The author contended, that too much power was lost upon a circular wheel, by the buckets entering and departing from the water at great angles with its surface. To avoid this difficulty, he arranged the oars, or paddles, which entered and left the floating medium nearly perpendicular to the horizon. Fulton sought to escape from the same loss, by raising the wheel

and buckets nearly out of the water. The younger Stevens has corrected this difficulty still further, by increasing the diameter of the wheel to such a size, that the buckets enter the water at about the angle represented in the drawing of Fitch's boat.

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## CHAPTER V.

*First Experiment with a Steamboat on the Delaware. — Improvements introduced. — Steam Packet between Philadelphia and Burlington. — Fitch obtains exclusive Grants from several of the States. — His Embarrassments for the Want of Funds. — Controversy at Law between him and Rumsey.*

ON the 1st of May, 1787, the new and enlarged craft was considered ready for a movement. She was called the *Perseverance*. She had been brought into existence by long endurance, by incessant exertion and toil. Her projector had sunk all the proceeds of his map, some eight hundred dollars, all the ready money he could raise by other means, and had incurred a fearful responsibility of debt. After these in-

credible efforts, what name could have been more expressive? She was tried, and made three miles an hour, in still water. But this result fell so far short of his expectations, and those of the company, that their faith and their funds failed at the same time.

Several articles were defective, and must be replaced at considerable expense. The packing of the cylinder was such, that steam escaped at the piston. There being in America no apparatus for boring the cylinder, except one fitted by themselves, it was rough in the interior, and produced great friction at the piston head. They attached a new condenser, called the "pipe condenser," which operated very well, but caused the motion of the engine to increase beyond the proper velocity. At this stage he exclaims, "So much money had been expended, that my subscribers were breaking off. Why these earnest solicitations, and my most excruciating anxieties? Why not leave them, and retire to rest under the shady elms, on the fair banks of the Ohio, and there eat my coarse, but sweet bread of industry and content; and when I have done, to have my body laid in the soft, warm, and loamy soil of the banks, with my name inscribed on a neighboring poplar, that future generations, when traversing the mighty waters of the west, may find my grassy turf?



Purely for the want of resources, I must abandon my projected steamboat, though as clear as any problem in Euclid.”\*

This appeal touched the hearts of his patrons, who determined to add to their subscriptions, and the business of repairs and alterations proceeded. They were completed, and a new trial was made in presence of the principal characters of the city, and several members of the Continental Congress. The performance of the boat, in which the company, guests, and citizens, took passage, was such as to draw from them a written message to Mr. Fitch, complimenting him upon the event. From the imperfections and weakness of the machinery, accidents were constantly occurring. To gain the speed requisite

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\* Rittenhouse testified, concerning this first boat, that “he had been on board when the boat worked against both wind and tide, with a very considerable degree of velocity, by the force of steam only.” In a remarkable letter to Franklin, concerning steamboats, written two years before, (October 12th, 1785,) Fitch said that “he was full in the belief, that they will answer for sea voyages, as well as for inland navigation; in particular for packets, where there may be a great number of passengers.” It is impossible not to be struck with the deep sagacity of this prediction, made when all the world believed the impracticability of putting a steamboat in operation for any useful purposes. See *Library of Amer. Biog.* Vol. X. p. 41. — SPARKS’S *Franklin*, Vol. X. p. 232.



to satisfy the inventor, a new cylinder, of eighteen inches diameter, was considered necessary. The expenses staggered his warmest friends; but the enlarged cylinder was finally obtained. It was now some time in the autumn of 1788, when he concluded to make a final effort, which should satisfy the world.

The scene is fully described by Dr. Thornton,\* one of his patrons, afterwards commissioner of patents under the constitution. Stakes were set up in Front Street, in Philadelphia, at the distance of one mile apart. The *Perseverance* was brought out and manœuvred in the stream. When she passed one flag-staff, it was struck, and the stop-watches were set in motion. As she arrived at the other, it struck, and the distance was passed over in seven minutes and one half; a velocity of exactly eight miles an hour. This experiment was made in the presence of hundreds of respectable inhabitants of the city, and inspired so much confidence, that a large party of ladies and gentlemen accepted an invitation from the happy inventor to take a trip to Burlington. On the 12th of October, 1788, she reached Burlington, from Philadelphia, against the current of the Delaware, twenty miles, in three hours and ten minutes, which gives a speed

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\* Lives of Eminent Mechanics, p. 32.

of six miles and one third an hour, having thirty passengers on board at the time. Dr. Thornton certifies that she made, shortly afterwards, eighty miles in a day ; and if by a day is meant a period of twelve hours, her rate must have been six and two third miles an hour.

It is related, as one of the incidents of the 12th of October, that, as the boat approached the city on her return, the inventor, too much elated by her triumphant success, directed the fires to be crowded, and her speed increased. Within a couple of miles of the wharf, a joint in the boiler gave way, and the steam, issuing out, scalded one of the firemen severely. As might be expected, the passengers were in consternation, and some even insisted upon being put on shore, when they straggled into town on foot.

This accident served to mar the perfect enjoyment which Mr. Fitch had experienced up to that moment, and to throw a serious doubt of its safety over the public mind. The vexatious jests, that were uttered at his expense, and at the expense of those who befriended his scheme, were no small part of this temporary misfortune.

Her boiler being repaired, she resumed her trips to Burlington as a packet ; but Mr. Fitch, not considering her as sufficiently perfect, separated himself from the company. He had the satisfaction, however, to receive a splendid flag,

in behalf of himself and his associates, from the hands of the Governor of Pennsylvania, and various complimentary notices from distinguished men, including the resident minister of France.

His entire dependence upon others for funds rendered it necessary for him frequently to yield his plans of construction to the opinions of others. He held free personal intercourse with but few, and disdained control from any source whatever. His strong desire for independence led him to make another effort before the Federal Congress.

"We have," he says, "overcome every difficulty which could cause doubts to arise, having done what was never done before. We have exhibited to the world a vessel, going against strong winds and tides, the vessel carrying the engine, the engine propelling the vessel, and all moving together against the current. If we never carry it to any greater degree of perfection, we have merited a generous reward, by laying the foundation for future improvements."

The old Congress appears to have considered the relief demanded by Fitch to be an affair appertaining to the states, and beyond their power to grant. We have seen that the state of New Jersey acted promptly in his behalf, so far as an exclusive grant to navigate her waters by "fire or steam" operated to promote the object. On

the 19th of March, 1787, the state of New York had given a monopoly for the term of fourteen years.\* On the 7th of November, of the same year, the state of Virginia extended to him by law some valuable privileges, on condition that a boat should be put in motion within her limits before a certain day. The states of Pennsylvania and Delaware enacted laws in his favor during the same year, containing very liberal grants in the nature of monopolies.

In procuring these enactments, he encountered every where the agents of Mr. Rumsey, for whom, like himself, a respectable company had been formed. In the year 1788, this gentleman went to England, where he died prosecuting the same project. The conflict of feeling and of interest between these two mechanics being direct and constant, they met at all points. The Rumsey company desired the repeal of the acts of Pennsylvania and New York, which involved Mr. Fitch in new labors and expenses. The examination in Pennsylvania required him to make a journey into Virginia, late in 1788, when he visited Sharpsburg and Harper's Ferry.

Returning from thence, he settled with the old *Perseverance* company, wiped off old debts, and succeeded in organizing a new association.

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\* Johnson's *Reports*, Vol. IX. p. 507.

In August, a new cylinder was completed at the works of Mr. Drinker, and one of Hall's condensers was prepared. But here again the company issued directions controlling the works. Dr. Thornton, one of its most liberal members, had invented a condenser, which was ordered for the boat.

The Thornton condenser collapsed, to the great chagrin of all concerned, and they resorted again to Hall's. This did not answer the purpose, and a second experiment was made with Thornton's by increasing its strength, and it was found to work ; but the resulting force was still inadequate. In this dilemma, his friend, Harry Voight, who had both mechanical skill and money, returned to his assistance.

The boat was again in readiness, and, being put upon trial, worked to their satisfaction. That night a storm arose, and the fires of the furnace not having been well extinguished, she took fire, and was burned to the water's edge.

The hopes and courage of the parties were not overcome by this new calamity. They set about repairing the wreck and the engine, and before winter had the vessel again in motion. She did not yet come up to Mr. Fitch's standard ; and the defect lay, as he imagined, in the condenser. Dr. Thornton and Mr. R. Stockton proposed to reconstruct the boiler, and mate-

rially augment the expense ; so the boat was laid up for the winter. No person can express the feelings of another with the force and aptness of the sufferer himself. Mr. Fitch, at this time, seems to have been drawn in opposite directions by his contract and his inclinations. His unfortunate temperament led him into many miseries, which he does not hesitate to disclose. "My temper of mind, being so different from any man's, causes me many difficulties. I am modest in easy circumstances, and imperious, and violent, and petulant, when in difficulty. I hope the considerate may forgive this, and I wish to correct myself."

His importunities and reasons finally convinced Mr. Stockton in regard to the condenser ; and a double one, of his own construction, was attached to the engine. On the 12th of April, 1790, she made a short trip up the Delaware, and drew out one of her pulleys. This obliged them to come to anchor, and submit to the "unfeeling derision" of the crews of vessels that sailed past them. Under this treatment, his heart appears to have sunk within him. When he supposed he had, by five years of almost insupportable toil, entitled himself to the gratitude of mankind, he received only the scoffs and jeers of his fellow-men.

Again, on the 28th of the same month,

Mr. Rittenhouse, Mr. Patterson, and others, being on board, they passed every vessel on the river, leaving them astern with ease. The ribaldry of sailors was now exchanged for the applause of philosophers, and his depressed hopes revived. The reality now seemed to meet the glorious anticipations of his early dreams. On a subsequent day, Mr. Erwin, Dr. Ewing, Mr. Gray, and others, came on board, and were regaled with a pleasure trip on the Delaware. The encomiums they bestowed upon the performances of the boat diffused "joy and gratulation" through the minds of all concerned.

During the summer of 1790, the Governor and Council of Pennsylvania were invited to sail in the boat, and, upon their return, presented a superb flag in token of their satisfaction. Accompanying the flag was a note from Mr. Charles Biddle, in which he says, "I sincerely hope your ingenious labors may redound to your honor and emolument."

By the terms of the grant from Virginia, it was necessary to construct and produce two boats, working upon her waters, by the 7th of November, 1790. To effect this object, a "consolidated" company had been formed, and a second boat built in the summer and fall of this year. About the time when the boats were expected to start for Virginia, a heavy gale



drove the new one from her moorings upon Petty's Island. It was twelve days before she could be got off, and the conditions of the statute were broken.

The terms of the protecting acts of the various state legislatures of that day, in favor of steamboat inventors, are vague; and the same privileges appear to have been given contemporaneously to different persons.

Fitch claimed a patent for "the force and power," by which many methods of application were included. The monopolies granted in New York and Virginia were for a method of navigation "by fire or steam;" terms that would at this day be considered too indefinite to convey anything.

The terms and obligations of the act of the state of New York had also been forfeited. But a new power had arisen, clothed with the united ability of all the states, upon the subject of copyrights, patents, and the encouragement of arts and sciences.

The constitution of the United States having gone into successful operation, Mr. Fitch, on the 22d of November, 1790, presented a petition to the commissioners of patents for an exclusive right, under the law of the United States. Among the numerous systems that had occupied his mind during the first few months of



his experiments, and before he had been informed of the plan of Rumsey, he had thought of one upon the same method. How much of this conception was original with him, it is impossible to determine. The scheme of Bernoulli became known to the Philosophical Society, through Dr. Franklin, late in 1785; but for this apparatus no steam power had been provided. It was merely suggested. The indefinite manner of wording protective statutes enabled an inventor to embrace in general terms all methods of steam navigation; and it does not appear to have been essential, that the applicant should have been the inventor.

As late as the year 1793, when the contest between the state and the federal powers, respecting exclusive jurisdiction on the subject of patents, had not been fully settled, the state of New York repealed the law of 1787, in favor of Fitch, and transferred its privileges to Robert R. Livingston. This law does not describe Livingston as an inventor, but a "possessor of a mode of propelling boats by steam, upon new and advantageous principles." Even the commissioners of patents do not seem to have considered it necessary that the applicant should be a first inventor, but only an inventor.

Before the commissioners decided upon the claims of Fitch, many months had passed, and

similar applications were before them for various persons. The matter was finally disposed of by granting, on the 26th of August, 1791,\* a patent to both Fitch and Rumsey for propelling boats by steam, leaving the question of priority and originality to be settled by litigation.

Patents were issued, of the same date, to Nathan Read, for an "improved boiler of the steam engine;" to John Stevens, Jr., for a "boiler for generating steam," and an "improvement in Captain Savary's engine;" to Rumsey, for an "improvement in Savary's steam engine," and for "generating steam;" and to Englehart Cruse, for an improvement upon Savary.

The application to the Secretary of State, Mr. Jefferson, and the Attorney-General, Mr. Randolph, was met by great competition. There were many hearings before them, by Fitch and his counsel, against the counsel of Rumsey and Stevens. The subject attracted so much attention, that the claimants were heard at the bar of the House by their counsel, Mr. Wells for Fitch, and Mr. Myers Fisher for Rumsey. The object, on the part of Mr. Fitch, was to procure a special act from that body, after the British precedents. The ruling idea of his mind appears to have been, that the substance of the

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\* American State Papers, Miscellaneous, Vol. I. p. 423.

invention consisted in the "force and power," and that all applications of it were an infringement of his right. The first experiments of Rumsey he believed to have been made with other power than that of steam, and he produced the certificate of Edward Pennington, that, as late as September, 1786, Rumsey had not applied a steam engine nor a force pump to his boat.

It is not practicable to examine here the extended field of this controversy. The evidence is voluminous, and requires ample comment in order to expose the truth. My present convictions are, that Rumsey had introduced a simple engine to lift water and force a pump, as before stated, in the autumn of 1784; his known and public experiments first appearing in the year 1786.\* Although Mr. Fitch was tenacious of having his prior right to all methods of propelling boats recognized, because he conceived that his method of obtaining power was a new thing on the earth, and the foundation of all applications, he appears to have placed confidence in no mode but that of cranks and paddles.

The patent itself is probably not in existence.

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\* Journal of Congress, 1836-7, p. 149. Reports of Committee, 1836-7, Vol. II. No. 317; also 1838-9, No. 265. Speech of Mr. Rumsey, Feb. 9th, 1839.

The official records of the patent-office, papers and models, were destroyed by fire in the year 1836. The order for a patent, made by the board of commissioners, as certified by their clerk, includes three methods of propulsion ; first, by water drawn in at the bows and forced out by the stern ; second, by air, applied in the same manner ; third, by cranks producing rotary motion, and connected with paddles. The decision of the board, placing Rumsey and himself upon an equality, so far as the patent-office was concerned, settling nothing between them, and driving him into the courts of law to establish his claims, threw him again into the depths of despair. While these proceedings were in progress, Mr. Vail, the American consul at L'Orient, in France, had become acquainted with Mr. Stockton, one of the Fitch company, and had made an agreement for carrying forward the project in that country. Mr. Wells, one of the directors, disapproved of the arrangement so much, that it was abandoned as a company affair, and Mr. Fitch was recommended to make an individual contract, which was signed on the 19th of March, 1791.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Efforts to improve his Steamboat. — Embarrassments for the Want of skilful Workmen. — He petitions Congress. — Visits France and England. — Publishes a Tract on Navigation. — Returns unsuccessful.*

THE adverse decision of the commissioners was made in April, 1791. It determined him at once to abandon a cause which produced nothing but contention, disappointment, and poverty. The company were informed, the same evening, that he wished to settle his accounts, in order to retire to Kentucky. He complains, that the laws do not protect his inventions; his country has proved ungrateful; and until justice can be done, "permit me to go to Kentucky, in behalf of the company. If not, I shall go there, and try the project for myself." Amid the general gloom, an answer arrived from the Spanish Governor at New Orleans, giving permission to build a boat upon the Mississippi, which greatly cheered his desponding mind. Arrangements had been pending between him and Robert Morris and O. Pollock, in reference to some scheme, which depended upon the reply from New Orleans.

On the 30th of April, the steamboat company ordered the works to be taken out of the remaining boat, which does not appear to have paid them dividends. The contract with Vail appears to have been assigned to Stockton, and Fitch was urged, against his will, to go to France. The steamboat company disagreed among themselves about their future course; and the summer of 1791 passed away without the accomplishment of anything important. Finally, they concluded to build still another boat, on which, with dejected spirits and "subdued feelings," he consented to work at weekly wages. The sum of four thousand pounds had been expended and sunk, in the various projects of the company, without returns. But confidence did not desert the intelligent citizens of Philadelphia, who saw what had been and what might be done.

It is apparent, that the principal obstacles to be overcome lay in the engine. If our limits would permit, it would be pertinent to review at this time, in a brief manner, the history of the engine, as we have that of the boat. They are inseparably connected. The motion of the boat is dependent upon the available force of the engine. The merit which belongs to the conception of an engine in 1785, to its construction in 1786, and its application in 1787, can only be shown by an examination into the state

of improvement in which it was then found. But we are forced to refer our readers to the books treating upon these subjects, with the remark, that the patents of Watt, in 1782 and the two following years, probably were still slumbering among the records of the British capital. The improvements of Watt, in constructing the double-acting engine, were by him long kept a cherished secret, not given to the people of England. The nation, among whom it was his fate to live, had acquired much proficiency in working iron, insomuch that he found means to procure machinery somewhat perfect in its construction.

Fitch had neither tools, apparatus, nor workmen. It was not until the year 1804, that the American shops began to make engines for sale, and the English had built them as early as 1774. The minute parts of the engine of the *Perseverance*, and its connecting apparatus, are not preserved. But the author's description, in 1786, shows conclusively that it was double-acting, and produced a uniform rotary motion. Its effects were the same in kind, though less perfect in degree. The construction of a cylinder, by the common blacksmiths of Philadelphia, was a work of many months, and after completion for the second boat, the work was so rough, that, with a diameter of eighteen inches, it had less clear



force than the one of twelve inches in the previously built engine. Watt and the English inventors, being more fortunate in point of time and residence, are entitled to the claim of priority. But there is ground for grave discussion respecting their merits as original inventors, when compared with those of America.

Mr. Fitch himself regarded the engine as his greatest achievement. In his petition for a patent, these opinions are forcibly set forth.

“The impracticability of procuring experienced workmen in America, your petitioner’s total ignorance of the construction of a steam engine, together with the necessary deviation from the form described in the books, in order to accommodate its weight and bulk to the narrow limits of a vessel, have caused him not only to expend about eight thousand dollars, in successive experiments, but nearly four years of some of his grants have expired before he has been enabled to bring his engine into such a state of perfection, as to be carried into use; and that having fully succeeded in his scheme, he trusts he now comes forward not as an imaginary projector.” \*

He begs leave to acquaint the Honorable House, “that the great length of time, and vast sums of money, expended in bringing the scheme

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\* American State Papers, Miscellaneous, Vol. I. p. 12.



to perfection, have been wholly occasioned by his total ignorance of the improved state of steam engines, a perfect knowledge of which has not been acquired without an infinite number of fruitless experiments; for not a person could be found, who was acquainted with the invention of Bolton and Watt's new engine; and whether your petitioner's engine is similar to those in England, or not, he is at this moment totally ignorant. He is now happy to inform Congress, that he is able to make a complete steam engine, which in its effects, he believes, is equal to the best in Europe, and the construction of which he has never kept a secret."

The earnestness with which he pressed the subject may be inferred from the following incident, related by Mr. John Brown, a member of Congress from the western district of Virginia, then embracing Kentucky.

One morning, at Philadelphia, he was awakened by a loud knock at the door, and opening it, he beheld "a tall, melancholy man, with a wild expression of the eye," who inquired if his name was John Brown. Answer, "Yes, sir." "Are you a member of Congress from Kentucky?" "I am." "Then, sir, I have business with you. My name is Fitch. I have, for a number of years, been applying my mind and resources to the discovery of a method of propelling boats by

steam. My money is now exhausted ; and I call upon you, as a representative of the western country, to advance me one thousand pounds, to enable me to prosecute my experiments. By means of my invention, I shall be enabled to propel a boat against the current of the Ohio, or Mississippi, as fast, deducting the velocity of the stream, as with it. My invention will open a new world to the people of the western country. Will you give me the money? ”

His new connection with the company, in the fall of 1791, produced a misunderstanding with Mr. Edward Brooks, a principal man, and with his good friend Harry Voight. In June, 1792, the boat was not completed ; and Mr. Fitch proposed to Mr. Wells, and Mr. Rittenhouse, that they should lend him fifty pounds to put her in motion, and take from his estate in Kentucky the sum of one hundred pounds. He tells them, as he had told Franklin in the fall of 1785, that “ this will in time be the mode of crossing the Atlantic for packets and armed vessels, whether I bring it to perfection or not.” But none of these inducements procured the required sum of fifty pounds.

The contemplated visit to France, under the auspices of Mr. Vail, was now revived, and he sailed for that country in the winter of 1792-3. By their agreement, one half of the profits of

the steamboat in Europe for two years was to be his compensation. During the passage, he studied closely the system of navigation then in use, and suggested various simplifications in the mode of reckoning at sea. The government of France received the project of a steamboat with great favor, and promised assistance ; but, soon after, new excesses broke out among her population, and Lyons, where he then was, became the scene of revolutionary violence and murder. The government had no leisure, amid the political troubles which surrounded it, to patronize the arts ; and this hope of relief, of late so bright, was now dispersed forever.

Mr. Fitch crossed the Channel to London, where he published his pamphlet on navigation, in 1793. It is entitled, "An Explanation for keeping a Ship's Traverse at Sea by the Columbian Ready Reckoner." The diagrams and explanations, contained in this book of twenty pages, show a high mathematical talent, and a gift of simplification and order truly remarkable in a self-taught mind.

After wandering through London until his money was exhausted, his thoughts reverted to America, and particularly to the wilds of Kentucky. He secured a passage in a homeward-bound vessel, and, as is said by some of his

contemporaries, doing the duty of a common sailor.

It is certain that he landed at Boston, in 1794, in a state of utter destitution; and from thence, for the first time since the year 1768, did he approach the home of his ancestors. His proud spirit being by no means softened by misfortune, his intercourse was confined principally to the sister whom he loved, and his daughter, Mrs. Kilbourne. The steamboat was here, as every where, the constant theme of his meditations and conversation. It is not known that he ever met his wife after their separation. This lady educated her two children, and, in after life, resided with the son. She removed with him to Ohio in 1805, and died at his residence in the county of Trumbull.

Mr. and Mrs. Kilbourne emigrated to Worthington, Franklin county, Ohio, in May, 1803, where the only daughter of John Fitch died in 1807. His son survived until the spring of 1842. Both his children have left numerous and respectable descendants.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Retires to Kentucky. — Endeavors to recover his Lands. — His Manner of Life, personal Appearance, Character, and Death.*

IN JUNE, 1796, Mr. Fitch left the residence of his brother-in-law, Mr. George King, of East Windsor, for the west, where he arrived in the autumn, or early in the succeeding winter. The records of Nelson county show a number of law-suits in ejectment, commenced in the year 1797, wherein Fitch is plaintiff.

The vexations of these proceedings were not calculated to allay the discontents of his mind. His health was rapidly declining, and a settled melancholy obscured the enjoyments of life. To strangers his manners had never been prepossessing; but to men of intelligence, who could comprehend his projects, he proved a most interesting companion. As a friend, he was faithful and devoted while the friendship lasted, carrying his efforts in behalf of others beyond the line of worldly prudence. The subject of steam navigation lost none of its interest to him by change of circumstances. Here, on the confines of civilization, it remained the same all-absorbing

subject. When his health would allow of moderate exercise, he wrought upon a model boat, about three feet in length, at the shop of Mr. Howell. Its machinery was constructed of brass, and polished in a neat, workmanlike manner. This model boat had wheels, and not oars, and has been seen floating in a small stream near the village by persons now living. It was burnt in McCown's tavern in 1805. There are silver spoons and other trifling keepsakes among the inhabitants of Bardstown, manufactured by him as presents for his friends, now treasured as the most sacred relics.

There are citizens of Kentucky who well remember his appearance and conversation. They recollect his striking figure, six feet two inches in height, erect and full; his head slightly bald, but not gray; his manner dignified, distant, and imposing. He appeared in the streets of Bardstown in a black coat, beaver hat, and black vest, with light-colored short breeches, stockings, large shoe-buckles, and coarse shoes; the representative of another age and school of life. Among the hunting-shirts of Kentucky, such a style of dress and intercourse attracted observation. As his health declined, the idea of steam navigation appeared to swell in importance to his mind, and became a kind of monomania. This

exposed him, occasionally, to the jests of his fellow-citizens here, as his experiments on the Delaware had done before.

When excited by his theme, his power over language was great, his remarks powerful, eloquent, and convincing. But he asserted, and perhaps truly, that the generation in which he lived was incapable of comprehending his invention. His expectations were fixed upon posterity; and, with an abiding confidence that the steamboat would bless and astonish his successors, he reserved for them that fame which he was not disposed to ask, but to demand. It was with such sentiments that he enclosed the manuscripts and drawings presented to the Philadelphia Library, and left an injunction, that they should not be opened until thirty years after his death.

Among a people famous for their humor, it is not surprising that his manner and sensitiveness should expose him to occasional attempts at ridicule. In such cases, his retorts were overwhelming. Master of almost every thing but himself, his sarcasms were insupportable; and his vehemence against such as effectually aroused his spirit by ill-timed jokes, is represented to have been terrible.

But the fire of his intellect shone only at irregular intervals. It was evident that his



mind, as well as his physical system, began to give way under its load. The delays and uncertainties of the law clouded the brightness of his prospects for enjoying an old age of ease and comfort. After much consideration, he resolved to be rid of earth and its calamities, and "fly to others which he knew not of." Among his particular friends, this conclusion was a subject of frequent conversation, and by no means considered as a secret. His object was to be effected by the use of liquor. In a moment of despondency, while at Philadelphia, he had once meditated a similar resort, as a relief from the vexations of his condition and the ingratitude of men. But he does not appear to have carried this resolve into a fixed determination, and all authorities speak of him as a man of extremely temperate habits for that day. His confidential friends at Bardstown were aware that some domestic affliction still preyed upon his mind; but the circumstances of his early life were never disclosed, even to his "trusty friend" William Rowan.

After he had gone on for some time in this career of gradual suicide, he foretold the length of time that his constitution would survive, by a mathematical ratio of debility. He withdrew from the public table to his chamber, where he took his meals free from the annoyance of stran-



gers and impertinent persons. This was about a year before his death, while he was still able to walk about town and visit his friends. Surrounded by all the circumstances which tend to make men unhappy, he lingered on in a state of mind at times apparently aberrated, or more properly speaking overwhelmed, until the 20th of June, 1798, when he signed the following paper, as his last will and testament.

“I, John Fitch, of the county of Nelson, do make this my last will and testament. To William Rowan, my trusty friend, I bequeath my beaver hat, shoe, knee, and stock-buckles, walking-stick, and spectacles. To Dr. William Thornton, of the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia; to Eliza Vail, daughter of Aaron Vail, consul of the United States at L’Orient; to John Rowan, of Bardstown, son of said William; and to James Nourse, of said town, I bequeath all the rest of my estate, real and personal, to be divided amongst them, share and share alike. And I appoint the said John Rowan and James Nourse my executors. And the legacies hereby bequeathed to them, my said executors, are in consideration of their accepting the said executorship, and bringing to a final close all suits at law, and attending to the estate hereby bequeathed.

“Hereby declaring this to be my last will and testament, this 20th day of June, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight; witness my hand and seal,

JOHN FITCH.”

This will was admitted to probate on the 10th day of July, 1798, fixing the period of his death between the day of signing and its production in court. His landlord, Alexander McCown, procured a cherry coffin, and, attended by half a dozen friends, his remains were placed in the graveyard at Bardstown. In the year 1843, it was supposed that the grave could no longer be found. The surviving executor, Judge Rowan, was unable to point it out. No monument, not even a rough head-stone, had been placed to mark the spot. At length, it was ascertained that a daughter of McCown, who witnessed the burial when a child, was in existence, and had a clear remembrance of the event. All traces of a grave had been obliterated by the wear of the elements during forty-five years of neglect. A pathway across the old graveyard passed over his body; and the rubbish of adjacent vaults, also decayed by time, had accumulated upon it. By a slight excavation the grave was identified. The death of one individual would have obliterated the

recollection of his resting-place for all time. The fatality which pursued his steps through life seems to have run on against his mortal remains. Neglected and trodden under foot, a few years more would have placed his bones beyond the reach of recovery and honor. A surviving friend, who knew Mr. Fitch at Warminster, Pennsylvania, after his return from captivity among the Indians, describes his temper as quick and sensitive, but bearing "anger as the flint bears fire." His countenance was pleasing, with an eye remarkably black and piercing. "In point of morals and conduct he was perfectly upright; in all dealings sincere and honorable; never known to tell a wilful falsehood, or indeed to use any guile." His executor, Judge Rowan, remarked with emphasis, "Fitch was a man of strict veracity. Whatever he advanced was under a full and honest conviction. He was remarkable for this, and never asserted as true what he did not firmly believe to be so."

In the manuscripts which he has left, this character of rigid honesty is conspicuous. The irritability of the moment shows forth without disguise, as freely as the open-hearted gratitude that succeeds it. For many long months, the petty interferences of his Company, almost driving him to insanity, were endured only to

fulfil, with scrupulous nicety, his obligations of honor to them.

Obdurately fixed in his purposes, he submitted to no opposition, which the power of man could remove ; and when forced to yield to inexorable circumstances, he seemed to feel that fate was wrong, rather than himself. But without this energy of effort, how could his destiny have been fulfilled? Without that iron fixedness of purpose, how could this man have surmounted difficulties appalling and impossible to others? His career was marked by the predominance of intellect over the social qualities. His great project required incessant mental labor, and his trials arose from the opposition of men and circumstances. Baffled in almost every enterprise, from the "cradle to the grave," is it singular that a mind constitutionally impatient of control should have wanted the amiability of those who are born, and pass through life, on favorable tides of fortune? How many men of genius have had the same weaknesses, mingled with the same generous impulses! The infirmities of stupendous intellects appear to be more grievous and palpable than those of ordinary mortals; but in consideration of their great actions, thoughts, or sentiments, mankind often throw the mantle of a heavenly charity upon their faults.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Consideration of his Claims as an original  
Inventor.*

A LARGE collection of pamphlets, diagrams, descriptions, letters, and other papers, came into the possession of Judge Rowan. It is probable, that among these were the first drawings and plans to which reference is made in his petition to Congress in 1785. In 1842, the house in which they were preserved was consumed by fire, and another shade of obscurity was added to the darkness that envelops his earliest inventions. The first model of 1785, with its brass machinery and circular wheels, which for a long time lay in the garret of a house at Warminster, is supposed to be lost.

His merits, as an original and first inventor, depend upon the details of his first engine, and his first connecting apparatus or application to the boat. All authorities agree, that until 1786 the application was made through a system of machinery attached to wheels. Of what parts did that machinery consist? What were its size, the number of pieces, form, finish, and power? These are minute, but important facts, that time

and accident may possibly disclose. The generation of Fitch has passed away. The remembrance of men respecting machinery is particularly uncertain; and fortune, instead of showering favors upon his name, appears to have delighted in concealing the memory of his deeds.

From the lights that have reached us, may we not safely conclude that Mr. Fitch conceived the idea of a steam engine, as an original and not a received invention? The credit of this thought, as a subject of popular fame, is taken away by the prior invention and existence of the engine in Europe. The credit due to the inventive power of his mind, as a mechanic, remains, however, unaffected by the acts of others unknown to him.

The same may be said of the conception of the general notion of a steamboat. After the discovery that there was an engine in existence, the merit of construction depends much upon the amount of information drawn from the prior inventors in England. He says, that a plan of an engine was shown to him about one week after he had come to the conclusion, that he could construct a steam engine which would move a boat. The drawings found at Mr. Irwin's were doubtless representations of the engine of Newcomen and Cowley. When Mr. Watt, in

England, took the old atmospheric engine under his charge, and raised it from a plaything to a giant, at once terrible and useful, he brought immortal honors to his name. With all the engines and parts of engines, all the descriptions and conceptions respecting it, before him, he had the genius to make it at once powerful and gentle. The praises awarded to this English mechanic are many ; his name is known wherever the steam engine is in use. Those who preceded him were necessary to his success ; and although he deserved, and has received, more renown than his predecessors, because his results were more surprising, it has not been found necessary to drown the fame of other inventors. In the case of the steamboat the result has been different.

If, then, Watt derived glory in England from the improved construction of the engine, is it not just to award honors to Mr. Fitch in America for inventions and modifications made at the same time, without the benefit of work-shops, models, or drawings ? For the engine, *as adapted to boats*, the English improver lays no claim, because the boat to which it was to be adapted, was neither in being, nor the subject of his designs. The first engine destined to move a boat, in England, was not built so early as 1785, neither had a boat been then projected, which



was designed to be moved by an engine. The operations of Mr. Miller, in Scotland, were commenced, if we can rely upon the authorities, in 1787, about the time when Mr. Fitch sent his specifications to Watt and Bolton, for the purpose of obtaining a patent in London.\*

There is still another circumstance worthy of attention, while examining the subject of priority of improvements in engines and boats. In the description which we have quoted from the *Columbian Magazine*, of December, 1786, written by Mr. Fitch, a double-acting engine is distinctly set forth. Mr. Watt, for some time after the construction of his double-acting engine, retained the improvement as a secret. It was patented in 1782,† only three years before Fitch determined upon the character of his engine, and was not generally known in England until 1786.‡ Watt's patents for rotary motion extend from 1781 to 1785,§ and for parallel motion his patent is dated in 1784.|| These dates place the era of the improvements in England so near those of the American operators, as to preclude the presumption of plagiarism on this side of the Atlantic. And on the 2d of July, 1790, Mr. Fitch

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\* Renwick on Steam Engines, p. 262.      † Ib. p. 223.

‡ Life of Fulton, *Amer. Biog.* Vol. X. p. 37.

§ Lives of Eminent Mechanics, p. 295.

|| Renwick, p. 223.



stated, in his petition to Congress, that he was "totally ignorant," at that moment, whether his "engine was similar to those in England or not."

Fulton turned his attention to the subject of steam navigation in 1793.\* In regard to the adoption of the engine, he advised with Watt, who, in 1806, thirteen years later, completed one for the *Clermont*, his first American boat. During the year 1793, Mr. Fitch was in England. His written specifications appear to have been sent to Messrs. Watt and Bolton in 1787. They were also furnished to Mr. Fulton, perfected and enlarged by himself, in 1793. It is not only possible, but probable, that Fitch became acquainted with Watt while he was in England, during the same year. Without further evidence, and reasoning upon probabilities alone, the presumption of plagiarism would lie against Europe, and not against America. To whomsoever the principal merit belongs of adapting the engine to the boat, incontestable facts prove it to have been an American achievement.

The contest on this side of the water has been carried on by the admirers of Rumsey, Fitch, John Stevens, Fulton, and Robert L. Stevens, all Americans. Those ingenious Frenchmen, Perrier and Jouffroy, had undertaken the

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\* Colden's *Life of Fulton*, p. 11.

application ; but their engine refused to drive the boat.

Let us return to the condition of steam navigation in 1785. Mr. Rumsey's model boat of 1784 we have described. Of the details of his engine we know even less than of the engine of Fitch. If it was intended to draw in and force out water through a pipe, no rotary motion was necessary. A right-line movement would be sufficient to work the machine. Whether it was an atmospheric engine working steam but one way, or at both ends of the cylinder, we are not informed. Until more light is shed upon this subject, it will be impracticable to give Rumsey his proper place among the improvers of the engine. The connecting apparatus, however, or the application of its power to the water through the boat, is more fully understood. And respecting this mode of application, we have already treated it in some detail, sufficient to show that there is in fact no competition between Rumsey and the subsequent improvers.

Modern examiners have properly confined the discussion to the boat, as reduced to practice. This boat contains no setting poles acting upon the bottom, nor force pumps pressing upon the surrounding fluid. If wheels or paddles formed a part of the plan of Mr. Rumsey prior to 1785, the fact has not been mentioned, or indeed

whether they entered into his scheme at any period. The boat upon which he was laboring in London, in 1793, when he was struck dead by apoplexy, is not represented as carrying either. Of the terms of his patent in England we cannot speak.

With Mr. Fitch, whatever modes he may have claimed, we find in principle and practice but one application; first, the old system of wheels, which, after various experiments, were supplanted by paddles or oars. It does not appear that any person, before his time, invented or made use of the system of oars or paddles. Of the originality of this member of the connected machine there is no doubt. The mere wheel, disconnected from the engine, was not the subject of original *invention*, because it was known before. Neither was the bare engine capable of a patent at that time; but between the clumsy apparatus of Newcomen and of Watt, as then known here, and the wheel or buckets, there was a gap which had not been filled. The engine itself was scarcely known; the rotary and parallel motion of Watt was wanting, much more a rotary motion acting within a boat. At one end of the apparatus lay an unmanageable power, a cylinder which, when filled with steam, drove a piston its length into the atmosphere and returned. Outside of the craft lay the water which was to be made the

resisting medium at the other end of the arrangement. The problem was, to establish the connection in such a manner as to gain a motion beyond that of sails and oars. It had not then been solved. It has now been not only solved, but established by years of use.

It consists of a crank motion, communicated to a shaft, to which is attached a wheel working in the water. This crank motion, this shaft and its appendages, striking upon and producing reaction in the water, by the force of steam, were found in the *Perseverance* in 1788, and were projected in 1785-6. The whole may be termed one machine. It had never, as a whole, been seen before. When set in operation, it caused the craft to move at the rate of eight miles an hour; and it actually moved, day after day, from six and one third to six and two thirds miles an hour. Such a speed derived from steam power had never before been witnessed. Here was a vessel, without the aid of wind or of animal power, but by a mysterious agency within herself, moving against both the force of the winds and the waters.

Twenty years' study and experience, not only in the boat but the engine, did not produce a velocity equal to that of the *Perseverance*. Miller, in Scotland, attained a speed of two and a half miles. The Earl of Stanhope, in 1795,

produced a boat making three miles an hour. In 1797, Chancellor Livingston, assisted by Nisbett and Brunel, propelled a steamer on the Hudson; but it did not exceed three miles. Livingston, Stevens, and Roosevelt, started another boat, in 1800, which did not reach the speed of the one last named.

In August, 1807, the *Clermont*, in going up the Hudson, made four and six tenths miles, and in coming down, five miles an hour. How long it was before the North River boats attained the rate of the *Perseverance*, we are not able to state with precision, but consider it to have been more than three years.

The question will immediately suggest itself, why a navigation of a given rapidity upon the Delaware should have been regarded as insufficient and imperfect, when a speed one third less was considered as triumphant and profitable on the Hudson. A little reflection upon the wide difference in circumstances will give the answer. All such projects are finally resolved into a statement of profit and loss. It is evident that the *Clermont*, the *Car of Neptune*, and the *Paragon*, might have run along the Delaware, and paid no dividends. The route was not one of the great channels of trade and transportation. The level roads of the Jersey shore enabled carriages and stages to proceed

at a rate equal to the speed of those boats. The Hudson was a principal channel of commerce. The journey by land along her mountainous roads was tedious, uncomfortable, and dangerous; the navigation by vessels, dilatory and uncertain. It communicated however with the lakes and the west; and property could take no other route. Under all these favorable circumstances, the protection of a monopoly was found necessary, in order to insure profits.

Considering the facility of land transportation and travel, Mr. Fitch thought eight miles an hour, and nothing less, as a running rate, would be an object on the Delaware. In 1825, the North River boats of the old construction seldom exceeded this. The legislature of New York, in 1798, when the grant to Fitch was repealed, and its privileges transferred to Livingston, made the attainment of four miles an hour an accomplishment of so much practical importance, that a monopoly of twenty years was to result from it. The period fixed upon for the production of such a boat expired twice, and was twice renewed, before the conditions were fulfilled, in 1807.

What surprising impulses did the project of steam navigation receive at that hour, above what had been effected before? Was it in speed? We know that in this respect there

was a retrograde of one mile and one third an hour. Was it in the convenience and fitness of the boat for navigation? The projecting wheels of the *Clermont* are represented equally as cumbrous and unbecoming as the paddles of the *Perseverance*. Was it in the perfections that twenty years had introduced into the engine? If the effects are to be the rule of its success, its power was not improved. And if it should be conceded, as it will be, that in truth the engine had received important additions, will this fact add to or diminish the value of the connecting apparatus? Of the worth and identity of the two systems of connection, we could judge better if we had more detailed information respecting them.

Perhaps the original patents of Fitch in 1791, and of Fulton in 1809, may be in existence, and therefore capable of comparison. The destruction of the patent-office has deprived us of the official records, drawings, models, and specifications. The patent of 1809 is represented to be for "a method of attaching wheels to the engine of Watt."\* The invention was not in the boat, nor the engine, nor the wheels, but in the connection of the engine and the wheels.

Fitch's patent expired in 1805, and it is not

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\* Renwick on the Steam Engine, p. 265.



known that it was the subject of litigation during the period of its existence. But in 1817, the original patents, drafts, specifications, and models of Fitch and Fulton were exhibited before a committee of the New York legislature, raised upon the petition of Governor Ogden of New Jersey. Witnesses were examined, and arguments of counsel heard. The certificates of Dr. Rittenhouse, Andrew Ellicott, Oliver Evans, and John Ewing, were produced, stating the performances of the *Perseverance*. General Bloomfield appeared in person, and testified to the fact that he had been a passenger on board Fitch's boat, on the Delaware, in 1787 or 1788, and regarded the experiment as successful. The committee, after much deliberation, reported to the legislature; and in the document submitted are the following expressions; "the steamboats built by Livingston and Fulton were in substance the invention patented to John Fitch in 1791, and Fitch, during the term of his patent, had the exclusive right to use the same in the United States." \*

Let us now suppose this neglected inventor to be placed in different circumstances. Let us suppose that, instead of the Delaware, he had selected the Hudson River for his experiments,

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\* New York Review, Vol. IV. No. 9.



and that, instead of an unimportant and short route, he had selected a long and valuable river, and had operated twenty years after the revolution, instead of five; that, in place of an engine made by blacksmiths, under the superintendence of a person who had never seen one, or its specifications, he had contracted for it at Soho, with Watt and Bolton, and had the control of its construction. Suppose the experiments of Arnal and Jouffroy, Rumsey and Stanhope, all to have been made, and the *Perseverance*, alongside of the *Clermont*, proceeding up the North River, the first boat leading the other one mile and seven tenths an hour, and arriving at Albany fifty-four and a half miles in advance. Would it ever have been difficult to find the grave of Fitch? When the names of meritorious inventors have been mentioned, and their claims to honor and emolument discussed on the floor of Congress, would the name of Fitch have been omitted? How can the fact that he lived earlier, saw no engine, and knew of no boat, diminish the reward of fame which is his due? Will a delay of half a century, in rendering public justice to the watchmaker and gunsmith of Trenton, weaken the obligations of his countrymen to admire his genius?

How many untoward events have conspired to increase this delay! How many to thwart the

success of his expanded schemes! The cold reception of the old Congress, his poverty, the ridicule of mankind, the burning of one boat and shipwreck of another, his disappointment by France, the sealing of his manuscript, loss of the patent and models at Washington, his obscure death, destitution of friends, and, finally, the destruction of his papers at Bardstown; what a throng of misfortunes to attend the career of one individual! All these are past; and now his deeds are to be regarded and estimated by that audience to which he appealed with so much confidence, an impartial and enlightened posterity.

L I F E

OF

ANNE HUTCHINSON;

WITH A SKETCH OF THE

ANTINOMIAN CONTROVERSY IN MASSACHUSETTS;

BY

GEORGE E. ELLIS.



## P R E F A C E .

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MRS. ANNE HUTCHINSON has never yet had a biographer, though history is so largely indebted to two of her lineal descendants, Thomas Hutchinson, Governor of Massachusetts, and James Savage, the laborious editor of the Journal of Governor Winthrop, the father of Massachusetts. Nor are there any known materials for a biography of Mrs. Hutchinson, in the strictest sense of that word. But for a detail of the circumstances and events, which alone have caused her name to live, the materials are ample. A curious inquirer might be glad of more information concerning her life in England, so far as it would explain her character and opinions, showing under what influences she had been educated, and what help she there found in attaining her peculiar views. Her history and experience in the new world are identified with the controversy, which originated in her instructions to an assemblage of women. It would be impossible to make her life a subject of record without finding the whole

interest of the work in that controversy. And so her biography must be written, as a part of local history, made prominent in our annals by the intensity and the extension of the feeling which once attached to it. I have gone no further into the metaphysics of the controversy than absolute necessity required, having written the fewest possible particulars of a strictly theological character. Incidental allusions to all the interests, and to the prominent men of the colony at that time, are required by the course of the events which are to be related.

The documents preserved among the manuscripts in the Massachusetts State-House, and the pamphlets and volumes referred to in the foot notes, are authority for the statements in the text to which they refer. The narrative in general is composed from these specified materials, by a fair, or at least an intentionally candid estimate of their fidelity to truth; when they tell the same story in different ways, the variance of representation being supposed to arise from natural feeling or prejudice.

# ANNE HUTCHINSON.

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## CHAPTER I.

*Introductory Observations upon the Experience and Situation of the Colonists of Massachusetts.— Their religious Policy.— The Vexations and Trials which they encountered.— Their Sufferings from their own Errors.— Examples of their scrupulous and timid Spirit in Religion.*

THE Antinomian controversy in New England, like most other religious controversies, bears for its synonyme the name of an individual, the prime mover of the strife, and the prominent sufferer by the result. In this case, that individual was a woman. Mrs. Anne Hutchinson has thus become one of the historic persons of our annals. Her character, opinions, and experience may therefore fill some pages with matter as interesting as it is important. She was but one of a series of sufferers, one of a line of witnesses, by whose endurance and testimony religion has



gained of real power more than what it has lost of arbitrary force for the consciences of human beings.

If Providence had designed to offer to the colonists of Massachusetts a succession of opportunities for discovering the error, and impolicy, and utter futility of their recognized principle of constraint of conscience in religion, it would seem, humanly speaking, as if no train of events could have been more wisely adapted to such an end, than that which actually constituted their experience. It is a somewhat curious fact, that during the lives of the first generation of settlers upon the soil of Massachusetts, not a single year passed by, in which they did not bring the civil power to bear upon a strange succession of persons obnoxious for a religious tenet. Perhaps, however, so noble a principle as that of unlimited religious freedom is the offspring of too long a period, the growth of too enlarged a culture, to have reached its maturity in centuries of time, or even amid a company of persecuted exiles constituting a church of devout Christian believers. Religious bigotry, of all human infirmities, is the least willing to look upon its own likeness in the glass, and much more to study the reflection of its features, so that when it turns away it may not forget the lesson. Mrs. Hutchinson was not the first person to propose to the Bay colony a

lesson, which took its life from the principle of religious freedom. She and her companions found a place of refuge, in their banishment, through the friendly agency of Roger Williams, who had but just before proclaimed a doctrine in Massachusetts, which would have silenced the Antinomian controversy, or at least have left the name of Mrs. Hutchinson to natural oblivion.

He, however, who should decide that there was nothing to explain, and even in a degree to palliate, the measures taken by Massachusetts against the succession of persons who poured contempt upon her religious bigotry, must have read her history without candor. The explanation of her course is to be found in the spirit of the age, the same over Christendom; a degree of palliation for her measures is insured by a peculiar delusion, which was honestly and painfully entertained by the colonists, and by their position. An intimate acquaintance with the facts connected with their harsh proceedings against Roger Williams, Mrs. Hutchinson, the Baptists, and the early Friends, will at least give to the persecutors the benefit of this plea, that the same error and weakness, which led them into intolerance, kept them also in continual disquiet, called up before them a series of trying vexations, and visited them with plagues of their own creation. Mrs. Hutchinson and

the other sufferers felt the blows, which were inflicted by persons possessed of an evil spirit, and who were first convulsed and crazed by its inward workings, before they found a measure of relief by striking at outward objects. The spirit of persecution vexed its subjects as much as its objects, the persecutors as much as the persecuted. As this view of the matter will help to illustrate many pages of our early history, and will especially throw light upon the experience through which Mrs. Hutchinson was led, a few facts and observations embraced in it may be here in place.

The English company, whose agents and servants planted the colony of Massachusetts Bay, was originally designed simply for purposes of trade, and to extend the King's dominions. The permanent settlement on the spot, however, was made by those agents and servants chiefly as a religious enterprise. It is doubtful if any other than a religious impulse would have sustained the undertaking, as all previous enterprises of like character had failed through lack of something. The Separatists, a peculiar class of dissenters from the English church, had found a wilderness home at Plymouth in 1620, and had seen the first fruits of the hard soil eight years before the Non-Conformists, another class of disaffected believers, had begun at Salem, and ten

years before the charter officers and fifteen hundred people were seated at Charlestown, Boston, Dorchester, Watertown, Mystic, and Lynn. An intensely religious spirit swayed with sufficient power the breasts of enough of the Massachusetts company to overawe and control the few, who might have merely assumed it, or been indifferent to it. Religion was the food and comfort of their souls. It was far more ; it was the consuming fire which ate up all their attachments and remembrances of home, all their regrets at leaving it, all their inclinations to repine at hardships, and very many, though not all, of their baser passions. Boston was the centre of their united religious action. They came together for religious exercises more frequently than for all other purposes ; and when they met for any other purpose, they sanctified it at the beginning and the close with religious exercises. They found in the Old or in the New Testament, but chiefly in the former, an instance or warrant for all parts of their wilderness work ; for constituting a church, for setting the bounds of a town, for electing magistrates or captains, or for conducting an Indian war. "Moses his judicials" promised to be a sufficient code of statutes, till a new one could be formed ; and even when a new code was formed, these were its basis.

To one who loves to explore and imagine past scenes and incidents, it is easy to call back the primitive appearance of Boston under the planting of its primitive English settlers. The peninsula, crowned with its three conical hills, fringed with sea-marshes, and reposing upon a bay whose rivers almost severed it from the continent, was soon occupied in preference to Charlestown, the original settlement, because of an excellent spring of water which it contained. The "old planter" found upon the peninsula was William Blackstone, who, as if ominously of what was to follow, very soon moved away to the region where Roger Williams afterwards found a refuge. The surface of Boston was an extended pasture, with but few trees. The first few years of its English occupancy saw it dotted with thatched clay cottages and huts, and a meeting-house of the same materials. More substantial but very small dwellings soon appeared. William Coddington, a fast friend of Mrs. Hutchinson, and an exile with her, built the first brick house. Winding foot-paths, the same that are now streets, connected all these severed dwellings with each other, and with the humble place of worship, which bore the same relation to the new town as does the centre of the web to its radii and circles. The simile might even be carried further.

The inhabitants of those dwellings were all neighbors. They had laborious work to do, but all the time not spent in work was given to religious discourse ; none to reading, save the reading of the Bible ; none at all to relaxation. Prayer was unceasingly offered. Sacred terms were the only epithets of language. Chapters of Scripture, which even the most pious mothers now allow their children to skip over, were then as familiar as the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount ; and the personal examples and traits of the Old Testament characters could be “instanced” as readily as the conversion of St. Paul. When, within less than ten years after the settlement, an attempt was made to shorten the length of time which, to the serious detriment of husbandry, was spent in lectures and in administering church discipline, the Court received something more than a reprimand from the ministers, and was forced into the humble work of apology. There was then no newspaper, no library, no daily mail, no club, no merely social gathering, in Boston. Intelligence was received from across the water as often, indeed, as now. Whole fleets arrived, sometimes, in a month, and news, not always fresh, on average periods of a week ; so great was then the impulse which brought “unconformable persons” to New England. Still the intelligence

received by the ships was mostly religious intelligence; and the books that came by them were the books of those days, the small quarto controversial tract, or the large folio Body of Divinity, the funeral sermon of a favorite preacher, or the tractate upon church policy. They were but fuel to feed a flame already burning bright upon the same material.

Now, it is a perfect marvel to us of our day, that the colonists of Massachusetts were not prepared to expect the very cases of religious variance and strife, which they encountered. They ought to have looked for them as much as for their crops. For experience has proved, in opposition to theory, that religious combinations, and leagues cemented by offices of piety and covenants of doctrinal belief, are not favorable to union and social peace. A favorite phrase in our ancient church covenants, by which the members agreed "to keep mutual watch and ward" over one another, will doubtless have a terrible sum of strife charged upon it in the judgment of the great day.

Entering into such a covenant in letter and in spirit, the colonists should have expected just what befell them. The whole tendency of Puritan teaching was to educate men and women to those very notions and opinions, the successive development of which caused such dismay.



The only wonder is, that so few were developed, and that these were so moderate in their eccentricities. There was in the colony, from its commencement, at least one university-taught scholar for every two hundred inhabitants; but all the people were prophets. There were frequent meetings of the brethren of each church for religious discourse; and "propheysings," and questions, and criticisms, were expected and allowed in connection with the services of public worship. What other result, then, could have followed than that which befell? The colonists were constantly in a state of uneasiness, anxiety, and disquietude, and perfectly amazed that, in a pattern which once suited all, individual critics were successively suggesting one and another improvement.

We must likewise take into view the extreme conscientiousness and the timid superstition of the colonists. Such instances as the following are found in their records; indeed, make up those records. The revered Cotton, so long tried and proved in England, within a week after his arrival, "exercised" on Lord's day afternoon before the Boston church, which he had come to teach; and, as he was then propounded for admission, he offered in baptism his son Seaborn, who came into existence on the pas-



sage, as the name imports. "He gave two reasons why he did not baptize it at sea, (not for want of fresh water, for he held sea water would have served;) first, because they had no settled congregation there; secondly, because a minister hath no power to give the seals but in his own congregation."\* Six months afterwards, the same excellent gentleman discoursed at "Thursday Lecture," when "a question was propounded about veils." A dispute was raised upon a difference of opinion between the minister and the magistrate Endicott, and only the interposition of Governor Winthrop prevented a downright quarrel.† About a year after the arrival of Winthrop's company, he, as Governor, with the Deputy Dudley, and Elder Nowell, went in midsummer to Watertown, to confer with the pastor and elder there "about an opinion which they had published, that the churches of Rome were true churches." The Court afterwards took the matter in hand, and endeavored to procure the dismissal of Elder Brown for the above opinion, and for "maintaining other errors withal, and being a man of a very violent spirit." The controversy, so begun, led

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\* Winthrop's *Journal*, Savage's edition, Vol. I. p. 110.

† Ibid. p. 125.

through many visits of interference to his dismissal, for an exhibition of passion and temper into which he had been goaded.\*

A superstitious fear early sent the spirit of division among the people of Charlestown. The inconvenience of the ferry had induced them to give up joining in the worship of their brethren, soon after the church had removed across the river, and they had settled a pastor for themselves. But the scruples of some led them to question their right to separate; and even after calling two councils of the ministers, they could not peaceably decide the matter.† Again, Mr. Lothrop, the first minister of Scituate, who had been imprisoned in London as a Non-Conformist preacher, and who came over with Mrs. Hutchinson, desired leave of the Boston church to be present at the Lord's supper, "but said that he durst not desire to partake in it, because he was not then in order, (being dismissed from his former congregation,) and he thought it not fit to be suddenly admitted into any other, for example sake, and because of the deceitfulness of man's heart."‡

These are specimens of the extreme and

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. pp. 58, 67, 95.

† Ibid. p. 127.

‡ Ibid. p. 144.

timid conscientiousness or superstition which continually harrowed the subjects of it with anxiety, and led them to fear agitation, causing them to suffer as much as they could inflict by a mistaken principle of religion. These were all trivial questions. It would be impossible either to excite or to extend an interest in them now in the same regions. But then they were matters of a deeply conscientious import; and trivial as to us they may seem, they nevertheless indicate one great step of advance beyond the themes of scholastic disputation in a preceding age, and the questions then debated; as, for instance, whether Adam would have sinned had it not been for Eve, and whether a dead priest could say mass.

It is not wonderful, that with such elements for agitation amongst them, and constituting the essence of their peculiar opinions, the Massachusetts colonists should have been exposed to a constant succession of infelicitous and quarrelsome experience. Their custom of calling for the advice of all the churches in differences of the most trifling, and often of the most private character, might even lead an uncharitable reader of their history to conclude, that they made dissensions for the sake of settling them, or keeping them open, in a pious way. The wonder is, that

they ever agreed. They needed no importation from abroad of the vagaries and eccentricities, which had just begun to swarm in England, such as, in their hydra-headed and chameleon-colored varieties, are portrayed by Edwards, Featley, and Pagitt. In such a state of things, the colonists had every reason to look for trouble and strife. Not only were they at the mercy of "disordered and heady persons," but they produced from among themselves a large number, to whom those expressive epithets would apply. Winthrop adds all the redeeming claims of candor and sincerity to weaknesses, which may be excused only by being accounted for. It is pleasant to observe that magnanimity and forbearance were not wholly wanting, but mingled some of their genial elements in the waters of strife.

## CHAPTER II.

*Arrival of Mrs. Hutchinson in Boston. — Her Fellow-Passengers. — Parentage and Relationship. — Religious Experience in England. — Her Object in coming to New England. — Admission to the Church in Boston. — Her Course on the Passage. — Opinions concerning her, and her friendly and useful Services in Boston. — The first Expression of her Opinions.*

THE preceding sketch may present to us an idea of the state of things to which Mrs. Hutchinson was introduced, when she arrived at Boston in the ship *Griffin*, September 18th, 1634. The Reverend John Lothrop, as already mentioned, and the Reverend Zechariah Symmes, afterwards minister of Charlestown, came with her. What opinion the former gentleman adopted of her and of her embryo views on the passage, we have no means of knowing, as he does not appear in the proceedings relating to her. Mr. Symmes, however, took a prominent part against her, and averred that his suspicions of her were aroused before they left England. The same ship brought over a copy of the commission lately granted to the two archbishops and ten of the privy council

as a committee to regulate all foreign plantations, and authority to call in patents or charters. By this commission the charter of the Massachusetts company, which Winthrop had brought with him, was demanded on the ground of complaints already made near the throne by persons who, returning from Boston, had brought charges against the government of the colony. The adroitness of the Court found means, in this and in repeated calls of the same character, to evade the demands by pleading in turn piety and loyalty, as the surrender of the charter would have been fatal to their existence.\*

The Reverend Thomas Welde, of Roxbury, one of the most zealous of the opponents of Mrs. Hutchinson, and the writer of a brief but most dolorous pamphlet upon the troubles caused by her, says that she was "the daughter of Mr. Marbury, sometimes a preacher in Lincolnshire, after of London." She was the wife of Mr. William Hutchinson, a man of a good estate, who had resided at Alford in the same shire. Winthrop, whose judgment was biased, in relation to her at least, says that her husband "was a man of a very mild temper and weak parts,

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\* This valuable parchment document, after escaping many hazards, is now reverently displayed in the chambers of the Secretary of State, at the State-House in Boston.

and wholly guided by his wife."\* He appears to have been a peaceable man, well esteemed and much trusted before his wife involved him with her own troubled course. The records of the first church in Boston bear the following entries; "26th of 8th month (October) 1634. William Hutchinson, merchant," admitted a member; and "2d of 9th month (November) Anne Hutchinson, wife of our brother William Hutchinson," admitted a member. The Reverend John Wheelwright is spoken of as her brother, but we are ignorant how the relation was formed. He was even more closely allied to her in opinions and sufferings.

In the account which Mrs. Hutchinson gave of herself when brought before the Court, she entered into her religious experience in England. Her statements very much resemble those, which the first of the sect called Quakers soon after gave, relating their unsatisfied thirst and hunger under the preaching, which was dispensed in the parish churches of England, their desire for light, their inward struggles, the exercises of their spirits, and the flashing of convictions into their breasts, sometimes through the instrumentality of Scripture, by the forced concentration of the thoughts and their perpetual occupation

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 295.



upon a single text, but more frequently "by way of revelations," that is, of mysterious promptings referred to the spirit of God. We have but little testimony concerning Mrs. Hutchinson, which does not come from her opponents. That her mind had been intensely exercised upon the great problems of religion, as well as upon the records and doctrines of revelation, is very evident.

With those allowances to human infirmity which the best and wisest do need, but which only the best and wisest know how to yield, and with a further allowance to the overwhelming reproaches and the incessant examinations to which she was subjected, and which may account for all the error justly charged upon her, nothing can be discovered or inferred in this age, from any known record, which sullies her matronly or her religious character. She must have been richly endowed with gifts of wisdom and of grace. She exhibited great inward resources, with much of patience. She displayed no worse or greater religious perversity than that of enthusiasm; and this only in a form different from those which it assumed in the conduct of her opponents. To the class of thinkers and reasoners to which she belonged, and which includes many whose names are attached to the wildest sects of the period of the English Com-



monwealth, we are indebted, not for the discovery, but for the warm recognition, and the earnest and eloquent assertion, of some of the profoundest spiritual truths. These zealous sectarians likewise brought out the power of many great practical lessons of Christianity.

Mrs. Hutchinson had been interested and fed by the preaching of Cotton and Wheelwright in England; no other met her condition and wants. The object of her change of home was, that she might enjoy the ministry of the exiled preacher at St. Butolph's, in Boston, Lincolnshire, in compliment to whom the metropolis of New England received its English name. Mr. Cotton had been acquainted with her at home, and regarded her and her family as estimable.

It is not probable that what was peculiar in her opinions had attained to any very definite form or shape before she left England. But opinions, and peculiar ones, she had at home; for she "vented them" on shipboard, and startled some of the passengers. The Reverend Mr. Symmes had his fears aroused concerning her, and imbibed a dread or dislike of her notions, of which she afterwards felt the effects. On his arrival, he gave notice of her eccentricities, her speculations, and her "revelations," to Mr. Haynes, then Governor, and to the Deputy, Dudley. It would seem as if she had had "a revelation" as

to the length of the passage. A consultation was had among the ministers and elders concerning her, when she was propounded for admission to the church, the consequence of which was, as we have seen, that her admission, though granted, was delayed after her husband had been received. Of course, when notoriety and dissension had spread wide the knowledge of her opinions, with definitions and inferences not proposed by herself, she was accused of having dissembled by concealment or explanations.

Mr. Welde expressed both his opinion and his feeling in reference to her, by describing her as "a woman of a haughty and fierce carriage, of a nimble wit and active spirit, and a very voluble tongue, more bold than a man, though in understanding and judgment inferior to many women." \* Josselyn, the voyager, received such an account of her in his visits to Boston, as to affix to her name the epithet of the "American Jezabel," † as also does Welde. The wearisome Johnson, who makes up for withholding names in the controversy, by freely decking the hideousness and folly of the strife, calls Mrs. Hutchinson "the masterpiece of women's wit." ‡ Winthrop, with more of courtesy, and probably as much more of

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\* Welde's *Short Story*, &c. p. 31.

† Josselyn's *Account of Two Voyages*, &c. p. 257.

‡ Wonder-Working Providence, Ch. 62.

truth, describes her as "a woman of a ready wit, and bold spirit." \* Her husband took the free-man's oath, March 4th, 1635, (N. S.) and was at once received to honor and place as a representative of Boston in the General Court.† Mrs. Hutchinson immediately attracted attention to herself by acts and offices of kindness, and was known as "a woman very helpful in the times of childbirth, and other occasions of bodily disease, and well furnished with means for those purposes."‡ Her kindness thus led her to perform services where the best feelings may certainly be exercised to advantage, but in which, according to the world's experience through long time, the spirit of gossiping and of superstitious storytelling, to say nothing of personal scandal, finds a vent.

The scenes and personages to which Mrs. Hutchinson was thus introduced, and the opportunities there afforded, were admirably adapted to work out the most harm, and in the worst way, from any elements of discord which she might put in commotion. For such services as she could render on occasions of anxiety, when the presence of mind and the all-enduring patience of a woman are the only available and efficient

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 200.

† Massachusetts Court Records, Vol. I. under date.

‡ Welde's *Short Story*, p. 31.

resources, especially in the emergencies of a new colony, she must have been held in high regard, for she was a volunteering friend, not a hireling. It is singular that none of our writers refer to her personal appearance, not even to say whether or not she was at all indebted to good looks for any measure of influence. Their uniform silence on this point is, however, significant of a lack of any extraordinary personal charms. It is certain that Mrs. Hutchinson soon obtained a very great influence. She was brought into relations of close intimacy with a large number of persons, and made herself welcome to their warmest sympathies.

When public attention was drawn to her, she had already won to herself, directly or indirectly, the large majority, indeed all but some half-dozen, of the members of the Boston church. She had used her opportunities of intimacy and confidence to inquire into the spiritual state of her female friends, at times when they were peculiarly susceptible of impression. She usually warned them, (and this was in fact the burden of her heresy,) against trusting too much to "gifts and graces," which was but a "a legal way;" and she led them to seek, in a phrase made immensely popular, for "the witness of the Spirit," and the righteousness of Christ.

## CHAPTER III.

*First public Notice of Mrs. Hutchinson and her Opinions.—The two Covenants.—Her Meetings of Women.—Antinomianism and Familism.—Revelations.—Political Influences.—Governor Vane and Reverend John Wheelwright her Friends.—The Effects produced by her Teachings.—Peculiar Exposure of Massachusetts, and Reasons for dreading Heresies.*

THE high-minded and devout John Winthrop, the father of the Massachusetts colony, a careful, and generally a most candid journalist of his own times, makes the first mention of Mrs. Hutchinson, in connection with her obnoxious doctrines, under date of the latter part of October, 1636, when she had been in the colony but a little more than two years. His words are, "One Mrs. Hutchinson, a member of the church of Boston, a woman of a ready wit and bold spirit, brought over with her two dangerous errors; first, that the person of the Holy Ghost dwells in a justified person; second, that no sanctification can help to evidence to us our justification. From these two grew many branches; as, first, our union with the Holy Ghost, so as a Christian remains dead to every spiritual action, and hath

no gifts nor graces, other than such as are in hypocrites, nor any other sanctification but the Holy Ghost himself.” \*

The same abstruse, and to many persons unintelligible character, which goes through this whole controversy, meets us at its very commencement. It will be observed also that Winthrop, after stating fairly the two great points defining the acknowledged views of Mrs. Hutchinson, proceeds to draw from them inferences, though he wrote out but one, intending more. This drawing of inferences will be found to have constituted the great mischief of the whole controversy; for the inferences were invariably bad, though good ones might have been as readily deduced from her views. Mrs. Hutchinson had employed two years with remarkable industry in behalf of others, considering that she had not a small family of her own. While she was understood to be anxious for the general spiritual welfare of the large circle of her intimate friends, she was held by all in high esteem for godliness.

Her earnest dissuasives to them against trusting to an outside righteousness, to the tokens of piety set forth in deeds and virtues, which was only confiding in a “covenant of works,” were well received; and she was understood as only

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\* Winthrop's *Journal*, Vol. I. p. 200.

enforcing the appeals of the ministers when she recommended an entire reliance upon the "covenant of grace," the free, unpurchased witness of the Spirit, communicated from Christ to the heart of the believer. So far she had love from many, approval from most, and credit from all. She was soon understood, however, to point very significantly to examples of those who trusted in the one or the other of these two covenants, and these examples were chosen not from the letters of the alphabet, nor from the world at large, but from the church communion and from the ministers. She criticised characters and sermons, and went to hear that she might afterwards judge, approving or condemning.

The fact, that Mrs. Hutchinson confined her efforts and gifts almost entirely to females, by no means proves that she was indifferent about making converts from the other sex. On the contrary, she may have exercised her wisdom in choosing the method best adapted to move the whole community with the most effect. Nearly the whole of the Lord's day was of course devoted to the public exercises. There was a meeting also on Saturday evening, at which women were present, and they mingled with the numerous assemblies for constituting churches, and for ordaining ministers and elders. There were, however, meetings of the brethren for re-



ligious discourse, from which women were excluded. Mrs. Hutchinson thought she was supplying a deficiency, when she instituted a meeting for her own sex. This enterprise of hers met with favor, rather than with disapprobation, at first. From fifty to eighty, and even one hundred, females met at her house, listening with devoted interest to her more than metaphysical distinctions of the two covenants. For one period she held two such meetings weekly, and the nominal purpose of them was for the repetition and the impression of the sermons delivered by Mr. Cotton on Sunday, and at his Thursday lecture. His sermons met with her full approval, as did also those of her brother, Reverend John Wheelwright, who had left his university honors and his ministry in London, to share the lot of the exiles. But the sermons of the other ministers in the Bay, who were occasionally heard in Boston, received more or less of censure from Mrs. Hutchinson. At any rate, she found in the sermons, which she criticised, examples looking towards the two different covenants.

After a careful perusal of the whole ensuing controversy, a reader finds himself possessed of a moderately clear idea of the matter at issue, though the technical phrases and the wire-drawn distinctions of polemics are freely used. Yet it



is not easy to convey in few words a fair representation of the controversy, without attempting to define the great points on which it depended.

Antinomianism and Familism are words expressing opinions, which were much dreaded of old in Massachusetts, and it was under these two forms of pestilential heresy that the opinions of Mrs. Hutchinson were not unjustly classed. The Antinomians, as a sect, had brought themselves into public notice in Germany about a century before this time ; though they in fact only revived, with local and circumstantial variances, the anti-Judaizing party of the first century of the Christian church. The sect appeared in England, with a hundred other sects, as preliminaries to the Commonwealth. The real idea or sentiment, which gave life to the sect, is expressed in its name, (opposition to legalism ; ) though this was only the negative which corresponded to the positive point, exaltation of the Gospel. The real intention and object of its members were, not to discountenance good works, but to put them into their right place, as the necessary fruits of piety, not its proofs ; to secure a state of the heart, which would make evidence of holiness, rather than a form of life, which might only assume the show of it. They preached repentance and holiness from the cov-

enant of Christ, not from the decalogue and the Law of Moses. They taught that the Gospel has superseded the Law.

Now, however clearly the distinction here drawn may have been defined in the mind of John Agricola, the recognized foreign leader of the Antinomian sect, it is easy to see to what imputations his views would be liable, and how readily and how grossly professed disciples, as well as enemies of the sect, might pervert them. This sect, like most other sects, suffered in public repute by having inferences drawn from its tenets; by having its negative rather than its positive opinions brought into notice; and by serving as a sanctuary for unscrupulous and outrageous pretenders to its protection. The distinction just stated was very soon lost sight of. Antinomianism came to signify a doctrine, which superseded the necessity of good works, which taught that virtue did not promote, nor vice hinder, salvation; that the commission of sin would not affect the eternal state of a believer; indeed, that nothing which a believer might do could be sin.

Familism defined another sect, of German origin, which likewise found an ancestry in the first Christian age, and which was imported into England at a time prolific of religious vagaries and fancies. The Familists, or "Family of Love," maintained that the deep and all-absorb-

ing feeling of divine love within the breast was the very essence of religion, the bond of union between believers, and between them and God. They held that all opinions, doctrines, forms, and modes, are but of trifling consequence compared with this, and that it was a matter of perfect indifference what were the sentiments of professed Christians, if their hearts burned with the pure flame of love. The oil which was to feed that flame, the offices, methods, and efforts for keeping alive the spirit of piety, were thus most strangely disesteemed, and most unphilosophically nullified. The disciples of this creed seem to have realized the description of the five unwise virgins in the parable, carrying lamps, but forgetting the oil, which, when consumed, needed replenishing. The inevitable abuses of such a creed are obvious.

Even with the best and purest disciples of both these sects, the doctrine of "immediate revelations," either through the forcing home to the convictions of some sentiment or example from the Scriptures, or wholly independent of the Scriptures, was acceptable. An "immediate revelation" does, in fact, signify an illumination brought about without the agency of the Scriptures; and the belief of such a favor enjoyed, as well as the pretence to it, could not fail to be a fruitful source of irregularity and fanati-

cism. The outrages, which had been perpetrated on the continent of Europe by some who assumed the names of these sects, and especially the recent frenzies of the Anabaptists at Munster, exceedingly alarmed the colonists of Massachusetts, and they felt it to be a matter of life and death for them to guard against the first advances of such heresies among themselves.

Such were the baneful and dreaded corruptions of faith, with which the views expressed by Mrs. Hutchinson were at once identified by those most in alarm concerning them. Of the two chief points above stated in the words of Winthrop, one, as we shall see, was soon put at rest, and the subsequent controversy turned upon the other point, with its inferences, namely, upon sanctification as being or as not being an evidence of justification. In other words, the great question was, whether a life, witnessing moral and religious obedience and holiness before men, is or is not evidence that an individual is in a justified or accepted state before God.

Mrs. Hutchinson was understood to maintain the negative on this question; that is, she was regarded as affirming, that a state in which man is justified before God precedes and is independent of his obedience of the law of holiness. The attempt to prove, or to find a ground of confidence for, our justification by means of out-

ward sanctification, she pronounced to be a walking by a covenant of works; she looked to a far higher covenant, that of grace. The moment this distinction is stated, we instinctively perceive that it could not fail to bring into discredit the formal and methodical observances of the scrupulous forefathers of New England. The outward manifestations of piety were then much regarded, and stringently enforced; perhaps their importance was exaggerated; they certainly were open to the charge of too much resembling display; for not only was a grave and reverent bearing expected, but austerity in looks, and sanctimoniousness in dress and phrase, were considered all-essential.

Political influences and jealousies mingled in the strife from its commencement. Henry Vane, son and heir of Sir Henry Vane, a privy councillor, arrived in Boston, October 6th, 1635, and, as appears by the records of the First Church, was admitted a member in less than a month afterwards, ("1st of 9th month.") He took the freeman's oath on the 3d of March following.\* From the hour of his arrival, he was unwisely and undeservedly exalted into a rival with the well-proved and judicious Winthrop. Vane was but twenty-four years of age, and

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\* Court Records, Vol. I., under date.

though of sincere purposes and honest impulses, he was far from possessing at that time the wisdom, which Milton's sonnet afterwards attributed to him. He was esteemed and patronized by Lord Say and Seal, the fast friend of the colony; and this was a high recommendation in his favor.

— But his chief claim to the enthusiastic regard and the almost idolatrous affection in which he was held, was found in his puritanical predilections. In early youth, he turned from the follies and the gayeties of the life to which he was born, and was gradually led into the ways of a mystical if not of a fanatical pietism. With noble and generous qualities of heart, and with spotless purity of soul, he nevertheless lacked a well-poised judgment and the calm penetration which looks at the bearings as well as at the profundity of truth. On his return to England from a continental tour, he clipped the locks which signified the young Cavalier, and gave hope that he would even reduce his hair to the puritan standard. It was with grief, that his father and his royal master heard of the alienation of young Vane from church and state attractions. That master, already looking out upon the clouds which soon after gathered the tempest that wrecked his kingly fortune and life, could not but regard each instance of such alien-

ation as ominous of what was to follow. By his advice, the piety-stricken youth was allowed to visit the plantations in New England, with the hope that experience would wean him from his offensive tendencies.

On May 25th, 1636, Vane was elected Governor of Massachusetts by the General Court, and after so brief a sojourn as made it impossible that he should know the spirit and the position of those over whom, in all his immaturity of judgment, he was placed, by a haste and zeal which were not wise. Not only was he thus elected to the highest office, but the honor was accompanied by unusual demonstrations of popular interest, and by the discharge of volleys from all the ships in the bay. It will be seen that the ensuing difficulties were aggravated by this hasty measure ; for Vane joined with Mrs. Hutchinson, and his fall was identified with hers.

The Reverend John Wheelwright, brother or brother-in-law of Mrs. Hutchinson, shared her sufferings, and was, in fact, as prominent a sufferer as herself. He had been a clergyman and a Non-Conformist minister in England, and, with his wife Mary, was admitted to the Boston church, June 12th, 1636.

Such was the state of things, and the timidity about new opinions, when public attention was drawn to Mrs. Hutchinson. The discovery



was like the discovery of a conflagration, which has kindled at night and behind a wall. It may well be inferred that her weekly lectures were very attractive, in the absence of all genial social gatherings. She possessed a wonderful memory, and had no slight ability both for generalization and abstraction. The textual composition and the mechanical arrangement of the sermons of that day, facilitated their criticism at her meetings, and notes were taken very generally. People from the adjoining towns heard of the meetings, and it was but natural that some women, not of the Boston church, should soon find a way to them. Great life and interest were imparted by the perfect freedom of remark, of objecting and of questioning, which was allowed. It would have been very strange, if her visitors had not been intensely engaged in this occupation, which, considering the circumstances, was so fascinating; and it would have been more than strange, if heresies and scandals had not been conceived at those meetings.

The character and abilities of Mrs. Hutchinson, "her profitable and sober carriage," were held in such esteem, that it required no little independence and self-assurance on the part of any one to send a glance of scrutiny into her assemblies, or to bring into question the wholesomeness of their repasts. Peace reigned long



enough to allow the leaven to work its way; and when the eyes of magistrates and ministers were opened, they saw at once the whole evil, which was then past their power to redress, though they set about it with all their zeal.

All sorts of persons were found to have been attracted by her spells, and involved in her tenets. Cotton and Wheelwright among the ministers; Vane the Governor, with Dummer and Coddington, among the magistrates; many of the deputies of the towns who had frequented Boston, with large numbers of the military and the yeomanry, were her abettors or disciples. The watchwords of the new party were heard at town meetings, at trainings, in public worship, in family prayers, in the blessing before meat, and in the grace after meat. Children asked each other whether their parents stood respectively for the covenant of grace, or for the covenant of works. Mr. Welde says, "And now was there no speech so much in use, as of vilifying sanctification, and all for advancing Christ and free grace, and the whole pedigree of the covenant of works was set forth with all its complements, beginning at Cain." Again, the same writer says, "Now the faithful ministers of Christ must have dung cast on their faces, and be no better than legal preachers, Baal's priests, Popish factors, scribes,

Pharisees, and opposers of Christ himself.”\* Personalities and insults were largely employed. At the close of public worship, sermons and prayers were criticised.

The ministers in the colony were classified, and the former most approved signatures of piety were seen, with the new eye, as the mark of Cain. There was a wandering of church members from their own places of worship on the Sabbath, either because their own preacher did not edify, or because another preacher did not, and they were set upon hearing, that they might afterwards criticise and have matter for objection. Some of the more zealous turned their backs and left the assemblies, when preachers whom they did not wish to hear stood up in the desk, or exercised from the deacon's seat. Mrs. Hutchinson set an example for this offensive proceeding, by leaving the meeting-house when the pastor Wilson was to speak. Letters not complimentary, but sometimes far from it, were addressed to the ministers, questioning their doctrine; and all the manifold provocations of religious wrangling, with all the exaggerations of calumny to increase them, began to alienate those whose hearts had previously been united by seemingly indissoluble ties.

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\* Welde's *Short Story*, &c. Preface, and p. 32.

Such were the elements of discord in Boston. Such elements could not work in it, even at this day, without strife. Thus offensive in themselves, and equally offensive in the mode of their promulgation, were the opinions and the practices which were identified with Mrs. Hutchinson. Before any public notice was taken of her course, and long before any arbitrary measures were commenced against her party, all the mortifying and estranging effects just mentioned had been brought about. Had there been therefore no public proceedings against Mrs. Hutchinson and her friends, or had the whole action against her been confined to the church of which she was a member, even then the colony would not have escaped a severe agitation. Thus it will not do to charge upon the interference of the public authorities the deplorable results, which had already occurred ; before they interfered, they had borne much more than they could have been expected to bear at all without uneasiness.

One other particular should be noted, to bring us into the position for fair judgment corresponding to that which the opponents of the new opinions occupied. From the very beginning of the controversy, its political and civil bearings and its seditious tendencies were foreseen. Church and state were even more one at that time in New England, than in the mother country. The

Massachusetts authorities stood in constant dread about their charter, a surrender of which was repeatedly and imperiously demanded of them. No one thing endangered their possession of the charter so much, as representations made to the throne and council of any thing like riotous or disorderly proceedings in the colony; and there were enough to carry such reports.

The colonists had likewise a new and a strange way of ecclesiastical polity to keep in credit. They were nervously sensitive to the epithet of Brownists or Separatists, and aimed at simple Congregationalism, which was a middle way between Independency and Presbyterianism. They were inquired of, and impugned, for their church method, even by those who were equally alienated with themselves from the prelacy and formalism of the English Establishment. Every instance of disorder, to which their system admitted facilities, was circulated in England with a glad sorrow, so that their anxiety and pride, as well as their fear of heresy, were enlisted to keep out all eccentric and mischievous characters and opinions.

Many stories to their discredit had already been told on the other side of the water; and in this present controversy, it is evident that they were actuated to a great degree by a desire to keep themselves in good esteem with some, and to retrieve their suffering reputation with others

at home. They had been reported there, without any allowance on the side of charity, for each of their acts of severity; and the story of the Browns, of Sir Christopher Gardiner, of Roger Williams, and other aggrieved persons, lost nothing by transmission. It was essential to the interests of the Massachusetts colony to keep off the reproach of being composed of all sorts of consciences. They must silence this charge, already whispered, to gain the double end of being left in peace by the foreign authorities, and to draw over worthy and profitable settlers.

The following extract from the eccentric Ward, of Ipswich, will show that the importance of this consideration has not been exaggerated. "Such as have given or taken any unfriendly reports of us New English should do well to recollect themselves. We have been reputed a colluvies of wild Opinionists, swarmed into a remote wilderness to find elbow-room for our fanatic doctrines and practices. I trust our diligence past, and constant sedulity against such persons and courses, will plead better things for us. I dare take upon me to be the herald of New England so far as to proclaim to the world, in the name of our colony, that all Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and other enthusiasts, shall have free liberty to keep away from us, and such as will come,

to be gone as fast as they can, the sooner the better." \*

Any one who will read the by no means wearisome tractate of Robert Baylie, the Scotch Presbyterian, entitled "A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Times," will appreciate the force of these last suggestions. In that volume, the dissensions among the Brownists and Separatists at Arnheim, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and London, are set down without any loss in the method of their representation. It was published just after the troubles with Mrs. Hutchinson, which form some of the aggravations of the volume ; but its contents were matters of present experience and of earlier warning in Massachusetts, whose proceedings in her case we are now prepared to review.

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\* The Simple Cobler of Agawam in America. London; 1647. p. 3.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The Excitement in Boston. — Means taken to allay it. — Reverend John Cotton and the Conference of Ministers. — Motion in the Boston Church to settle Mr. Wheelwright, opposed by Deputy-Governor Winthrop. — Offence taken. — Disputation in Writing. — Governor Vane's Proceedings. — The Court consults the Elders on the Controversy. — Hugh Peters. — Mr. Wilson's Speech. — Discord and Contention.*

ON the first disclosure of the influence which Mrs. Hutchinson had already wrought, there was much of fair and comparatively of judicious effort used to win her and her followers from their opinions, before recourse was had to arbitrary and compulsory measures. There were many private interviews between the prominent parties, and numerous conferences in the public assemblies. It was honestly supposed, at first, that the differences would not grow to dissensions. Wisdom and charity together, or a little increase of either at the beginning, would have softened and perhaps averted the catastrophe. The agitation began in the Boston church, and to that it would doubtless have been confined in its most exciting features, but that, in the spirit



of a self-imposed obligation, which we might judge uncharitably did we call it intermeddling, the other ministers of the colony, assembling on occasion of the General Court in October, 1636, took up the matter with much warmth of zeal.

The Reverend John Cotton, the teacher, was from the first implicated on the side of Mrs. Hutchinson and her supporters. Whether any adroit policy on her part exaggerated or misconstrued his apparent and unsuspecting personal regard; whether she originally derived her leading views from him, and erred by departing from the qualifications they received from his lips; whether she availed herself of his high standing, for countenance and protection; whether he at first sympathized with her, was pleased with her approval, and subsequently deserted her from timidity, from pliancy, or from changed convictions; these are questions which will present themselves as alike interesting and material by and by. It is certain, however, that Mrs. Hutchinson herself, her friends, and her enemies, presumed, at the beginning, that the sympathy of the honored teacher was on her side. Her adherents were wont to say, that they held only what Mr. Cotton held. He was even their idol; and it may be—let the candor of history decide—that the other ministers were not wholly above being influenced by the comparisons which she

was known to draw. Cotton's subsequent account of his relation to the obnoxious party was, that in their earlier disclosures of opinion they cautiously qualified their views, so as to keep them in harmony with his own; but that, as they advanced in numbers and boldness, they dissembled, practised reserve before some only to secure a very free license before others, and made him, in his ignorance, though to his great discredit, "the stalking-horse" of their heresies and vagaries.

The report had gone abroad that the ministers out of Boston preached a covenant of works. This offensive charge, made more odious, because, as above suggested, it was aggravated by a comparison, they regarded as a sufficient warrant for seeking, by a private conference with Mrs. Hutchinson and Mr. Wheelwright, to acquaint themselves with the new opinions. The intent of the ministers was, if they could possess the ground, to warn or admonish the Boston church concerning their diseased members, in order to prevent the infection from spreading over the other churches. Cotton, too, stood on the defensive. The result of this conference was, that Cotton and Wheelwright satisfied the ministers by agreeing, as they alleged they had preached, "that sanctification did help to evidence justification;" that is, that outward holiness was, to a degree, testimony to

a righteous state within. As to the other principal point in agitation, it appeared that, while Mr. Cotton consented with other ministers to "the indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost," Mrs. Hutchinson and Wheelwright held what amounted to a *personal union* of the Holy Ghost with the believer.

The next measure tending to strife, was a movement on the part of members of the Boston church, who had become fascinated by the new dispensation of grace, to call Wheelwright as their teacher. This measure had been proposed to the church on Sunday, October 23d, 1636, and the proposition was brought up for action on the following Sunday. Throughout the whole agitation in that church, the pastor, Wilson, and its most honored member, John Winthrop, led and guided the opposition to Mrs. Hutchinson and her brother. Indeed, when the strife was at the highest, there were only five in that whole communion who kept upon the side of the other ministers and churches of the Bay. In the measure now proposed, Wilson was of course restrained to silence, and he left to Winthrop the difficult task of opposing a hasty popular impulse. Winthrop was faithful and wise. He met the measure with decided objections. He urged, that the church was already well supplied with ministers whose hearts, minds, and spirits the members

knew ; whose prayers, counsels, and labors had been blessed. He said, that, thus supplied, there was no need of putting the peace of the church at hazard, as would be done by calling one whose spirit they did not know, and who in judgment did in fact seem to differ.

Winthrop could not well say less than this ; for Wheelwright had kept a marked reserve and distance from the intimacy of the other ministers. The devout and single-handed opponent of the excited inclinations of those whom he addressed, proceeded to allege two objectionable sentiments, which Wheelwright had uttered in a sermon ; namely, " that a believer was more than a creature," and " that the person of the Holy Ghost and a believer were united." Governor Vane replied by expressing his wonder at Winthrop's remarks, as Mr. Cotton had but lately uttered his approval of Wheelwright's doctrines. Mr. Cotton averred that he did not remember the first of the objectionable statements, and desired Wheelwright to explain what he meant. Wheelwright allowed he had uttered them, and referred to the occasion. An attempt being made for a reconciliation, Mr. Winthrop candidly said, that though he and Wheelwright might perhaps come to an agreement, and though he held in reverence the godliness and abilities of the candidate, so that, if occasion called, he could be content to

live under his ministry, "yet, seeing he was apt to raise doubtful disputations, he could not consent to choose him to that place."\* The church then gave over the purpose, that Wheelwright might be called to a new church about to be gathered at Mount Wollaston, now Braintree.

Winthrop's opposition, however, gave offence, which spent itself in open censure of his remarks in the congregation. With the dignified sincerity and frankness which characterized him, he took the earliest opportunity, being the next day, to explain and justify himself. He was censured for the publicity of his remarks, which, it was said, ought at least to have been preceded by some private dealing with Wheelwright. He acknowledged this error, but affirmed that when he heard the objectionable sentiments, they occurred in a discourse the doctrine of which was sound, and therefore supposed the words were spoken figuratively; but he had since learned that Wheelwright held the sentiments literally, and laid stress upon them. To the charge of having spoken with bitterness, he replied by alleging his warm temperament, which made him earnest in serious things, though still he loved Wheelwright, and honored the gifts and graces of God in him. The third and severest censure against this

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 202.

faithful defendant was, that he had attributed to Wheelwright heresies which he did not entertain.

To this he replied that he had since spoken with the brother, who denied entertaining the two opinions which had been specified. Here we may presume to think, that it would have been most wise for Winthrop to have stopped. But he proceeded to show, by the mischievous process of drawing inferences, that Wheelwright did nevertheless hold the sentiments, as they followed from his acknowledged belief of a real, that is, a personal union of the Holy Ghost with the believer, so that "a believer must be more than a creature, viz., God-man, even Christ Jesus." There is, said Winthrop, a *true* union, a union of sympathy and relation, between husband and wife; but as they still remain a man and a woman, it is not a *personal* union.\* We must allow that Winthrop's logic was unexceptionable as logic; but he should have known that syllogisms will not always apply to favorite theological tenets, and that a doubtful disputant will not always abide by the views, which may be shown "by necessary consequence" to follow from his expressed opinions.

Winthrop concluded by submitting to the church to judge about the doctrine, hoping that

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\* Winthrop, Vol. 1. p. 203.

Cotton would clear it up, as in good measure he had done. He likewise affectionately requested of Wheelwright, that as estrangement and variance grew so readily and rankly from the use of words, which tended to doubtful disputation, "and had no footing in Scripture, nor had been in use in the purest churches for three hundred years after Christ," but were of human invention, they might be forborne. Winthrop referred to the phrases, "person of the Holy Ghost," and "real union;" and though he said that he did not intend to dispute the matter, as having no calling to it, "yet, if any brother desired to see what light he walked by, he would be ready to impart it to him." No reply was made, and Winthrop soon after wrote out his views on the subject, fortified with Scripture, and sent them to Mr. Cotton. No man could do the work better than he.

A disputation in writing followed. The question at issue was too alluring to both parties alike, and neither could probably have been put to silence upon it at the cost of life. The agreeable maxim of our day, that evil has its mission as well as good, leads us to hope that this disputation afforded a certain wilderness joy to the worn exiles of Christ. It was in the midst of the alarms caused by the Pequots; and we may be sure that those of the Pilgrims, who



were then fighting with carnal weapons, had the easiest and probably the less passionate warfare. The disputation was between Governor Vane, Mr. Cotton, and Mr. Wheelwright, of the one party, and Deputy-Governor Winthrop and Mr. Wilson, on the other. Winthrop judiciously labored to keep out from use "terms of human invention," and to confine certain other terms to their scriptural use; then the indwelling of the Holy Ghost would be rightly understood in the same way as the indwelling of the Father and the Son. But whether this indwelling was by gifts and power only, or by any other manner of presence, as the Scripture did not explain, "it was earnestly desired that the word person might be forborne." Whether this disputation was thought to promise an end to strife, or to risk an increase of it, it is difficult to say; but though it seems to have been amicably conducted, the very fact that it was confined to a few made all more excited about the matter.

A circumstance now occurred, which, while somewhat mysterious and unexplained in its character, doubtless contributed much towards deepening in contention the party lines, which disputations and conferences had already defined. Governor Vane had privately made known to the council, that it was necessary for him, for reasons of a private nature, to return to England.

A special Court was convened on this account, December 7th, 1636,\* when he made known the necessity of his departure, some of the council vouching for the cogency of the reasons, though they were not of a nature to be imparted to the whole Court. Time was taken to consider the matter. The next day, one of the magistrates displayed much pathetic regret at the loss of such a governor at such a time, when the French and Indians caused such alarm.

Vane was affected by sympathy to tears; and, being carried away for a moment by his feelings, he protested that, though the reasons for his departure vitally concerned his whole outward estate, yet he would not leave at such a crisis, did he not foresee the inevitable judgments of God hanging over them for their dissensions, while he himself lay under the scandalous imputation of being the chief cause of them. He thought it best, therefore, that he should give place for a time. But the Court would not allow his departure on these grounds. Then, soon recalling his discretion and his manliness, he insisted that his private estate gave him cause enough for departing, and excused his hasty utterance, as of passion, not of judgment. The

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\* Court Records, Vol. I., under date. See also Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 207.

Court then granted him liberty to go, though it seems that it was on his promise to return, which, however, he needed not to redeem. A week afterwards, a representation was made to the Court that the Boston church would not allow the Governor to depart on the reasons alleged, and he, as an obedient child of the church, consented to remain.

On the supposition that Vane would return to England forthwith, provision had been made for calling a Court of Elections on the 15th of the month, to supply the vacancy; but the determination of Vane to abide by the wish of the church rendered a new choice unnecessary, and it was quietly determined to retain him in office. A Court of Deputies, however, had assembled without the magistrates, and they advanced the controversy one step farther by calling the elders of the churches to advise measures for pacifying the increasing and bitter contentions. Governor Vane laid the occasion before the ministers in the First Church, where the sessions of the Court were held. Mr. Dudley and Winthrop advised great plainness and frankness of speech, that every thing might be laid open. Vane approved the advice, but showed some irritated feeling, because, without his privity, the ministers had already been considering the matter in a church way, and had drawn out a list of

the points on which Mr. Cotton differed, as was supposed, from them, asking of him explicit answers, which he had promised.

Upon Vane's expression of his offence on this account, the plain-spoken and famous Hugh Peters, minister of Salem, took up the matter, and told the Governor next day that the spirits of the ministers were much saddened by his jealousy of their meetings. Vane excused his speech as sudden and mistaken. Mr. Peters then went on, without excess of deference, to tell the Governor that before he came, less than two years since, the churches were at peace. He also "besought him humbly to consider his youth, and short experience of the things of God, and to beware of peremptory conclusions, which he perceived him to be very apt unto." Mr. Peters significantly hinted that, from his experience in the Low Countries, he had observed that pride was a principal cause of new opinions, and that new notions lift up the mind, while idleness likewise tended to the same effect. Vane replied, "that the light of the gospel brings a sword, and the children of the bondwoman would persecute those of the freewoman." \*

This certainly must be regarded as peremptory, though it may have been wholesome lan-

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 209.

guage on the part of Mr. Peters, who had been in the country no longer than Vane, and was not yet forty years of age. Wilson, the pastor, made a speech which gave great offence to the friends of Mrs. Hutchinson. He bewailed sadly the condition of the churches, and foresaw irreparable breaches if the alienations were not healed, while he laid all the blame upon the new opinions. This speech, together with Mr. Cotton's sermon the same day, at Thursday lecture, and the prophesyings in the meeting-house after it, set the parties in open conflict. It appeared that Governor Vane, the magistrates Coddington and Dummer, and the ministers Cotton and Wheelwright, with the large majority of the Boston church, made common cause with Mrs. Hutchinson about justification. By all these Mr. Wilson was severely censured for his speech in the Court, and the church indeed were about to admonish him; but this measure was prevented by Cotton.

It is one of the very few alleviations of this whole controversy, that the chief church of the colony retained, until death called them away, the pastor and the teacher who were thus at first ranked on different sides, and that they never parted friendship. Wilson vindicated his speech on the ground that great plainness was necessary, and had been called for. He, however, received very harsh treatment from former

friends, even to insults and reproaches, but had grace given him to bear them, and even to listen to a "grave exhortation" from his colleague, sustained chiefly by Winthrop. The next day, however, he preached, and had an opportunity of presenting his side, which he did with such success, that even Vane bore public testimony to him. Several letters, of a friendly, but of a very plain and argumentative character, passed between Winthrop and Cotton, in reference to Wilson's speech, which his colleague continued to regard as objectionable. These letters, by Cotton's permission, were shown to Wilson.

While thus the leaders of the controversy, perfect masters of the tactics, met in fair conflict, a host of absurd notions was brought into light as the alleged consequences of the new views; these notions bearing the more objectionable and alarming features of Antinomianism. The publicity and popular occasions of the dispute put the words and passions of the controversy, without its distinctions and issues, into the mouth of the public. For there was then, as now, a public, whose voice in such matters is like the spray that parts from the ocean wave, which annoys and drenches the poor mariners, while it does not help to bear up or to guide the tossed ship. Some even went the whole length of maintaining, "that a man might attain to any

sanctification in gifts and graces, and might have spiritual and continual communion with Jesus Christ, and yet be damned." Certainly, the prospective fate of the "dry trees," if any there were in the colony, must have been deplorable enough, if the green trees were subject to such a thorough anomaly of relation between cause and effect.

The most bitter enemy of Puritanism would have desired no higher joy for a prelatical appetite, than to have looked upon the Boston church at this moment of its spiritual desertion. The wildest fancies issued like the forked tongues of other than a pentecostal inspiration from the mouths of a few men and women; and the meek piety which mourned in silence waited to number the vials, till the opening of the seventh should pour its woe upon the enchanted and fallen church of the Lord Jesus in the wilderness. Revelations, the last dread scourge of fanaticism, were now to be looked for; and what might be their prompting none could know. But four or five of that covenanted company of disciples, who should even have prayed for, rather than contended about, the divine love of the Familistic creed, but four or five believed as they believed before.



## CHAPTER V.

*Mr. Cotton examined. — A Day of Fasting. — Passengers for England. — Boston Church. — The Question raised by Mrs. Hutchinson. — Personalities. — Conference of Ministers. — Greensmith fined for Contempt. — Mr. Wheelwright proceeded against. — Judgment upon him. — Remonstrance from the Boston Church. — Tumult at the Court. — Winthrop chosen Governor. — Conduct of Vane and his Friends. — Disputations. — Mr. Wheelwright. — A new Measure of the Court. — Conduct of the Disaffected to Winthrop. — Departure of Vane.*

MR. COTTON being still involved with the obnoxious party, and being regarded as the individual through whose supposed approval it received constant accessions, the ministers proceeded to a rigid examination of his views. Either Mrs. Hutchinson sought, or he encouraged, a very close intimacy. The ministers took offence at some opinions which he had himself expressed, and at others broached by members of his church, of whom he entertained a high regard, and with whom he was very familiar. They drew up a paper, embracing sixteen points of inquiry, to which they desired his full answers. To some

of these he replied to their satisfaction, but left them still in anxiety about others. Copies of these papers, being circulated, spread yet wider the excitement, and the ministers made a rejoinder to his replies.

January 20th, 1637, (N. S.,) was observed as a public Fast throughout all the churches of the jurisdiction on account of their dissensions and the trouble with the Pequot Indians. To this day of sad observance the words of the prophet of solemn things were most signally applicable. It was a "Fast for strife and debate." All the ministers took occasion to preach and pray on the subject which distracted all minds. The spirit of infatuation seems to have seized alike upon teachers and their flocks. Mr. Wheelwright, as we shall soon see, was called to account for his use of the day.

A ship being about to sail for England with many passengers, early in February, Mr. Cotton took advantage of the first Sunday, the third day of that month, to attempt to soften and relieve the disgraceful and melancholy reports, which he well knew some of those passengers would carry home with them. As has been already hinted, even the most discreet of the exiles here felt a deep anxiety about the opinions and slanders, which were circulated concerning the colony in England. They had reason now to dread the

true and uncolored representation of facts, alike as it affected the good esteem of their church order, and as it might decide, unfavorably to them, the intentions of worthy persons who meditated a removal hither. Cotton preached in a deprecatory strain, and sought, doubtless with a feeling which must either have choked or set free his eloquence, to put the best construction upon the state of things. He bid the passengers inform their brethren, that all the strife was about magnifying the grace of God, for which both parties contended; the one party seeking to advance the grace of God within us, (justification,) the other, to advance the grace of God towards us, (sanctification.) Cotton would have them thus encourage Christians to come over, because, if they were seeking for grace, they would be sure to find it of one or another sort.

Mr. Wilson followed with his exercise, and declared that he knew none of the elders or brethren of the churches, who did not labor to advance, in a Scripture sense, the free grace of God in justification, though he insisted upon the use and necessity of sanctification.\* Had the town of Boston been furnished at that time with a powerful fire-engine, the discharge of its contents indiscriminately upon that heated as-

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\* Winthrop, Vol. 1. p. 213.

sembly would doubtless have been the most effectual extinguisher of the strife. Wilson, of course, gave offence; but, as Winthrop with great simplicity says, he so cleared the subject, that "no man could tell (except some few who knew the bottom of the matter) where any difference was."

The spirit of discord was now at its height. The controversy had now become principally concentrated on the question, What is the best evidence a person can have of justification, that is, of being in an accepted state before God? It was of the very marrow of Puritan divinity, that which prevailed in our churches, that outward sanctification, practical holiness of life, was the best evidence. Mrs. Hutchinson and Wheelwright taught that the Spirit of God, by a powerful application, begat in the breast, or sent home there, or directly revealed, a powerful assurance of justification; a question on which if there be any perplexity, it may be easily resolved by the relation between cause and effect; though, after all, the contest between the disputants was, which of the two, sanctification or justification, was the cause, and which the effect. The case seems to be paralleled when an accused person is brought before a court of justice. If he wish to depart from the method of law, and insist upon his own conviction of his innocence,

he may proceed to prove it, and the court will listen, but his inward convictions must be sustained by demonstrable facts.

It is, however, easy to understand the alarm which was experienced from the literal declaration of justification as assured independently of sanctification. The doctrine not only brought under contempt the methods and tokens of external obedience, but it also opened a wide door to let in immediate revelations, enthusiasms, and rhapsodies. It was at this stage of its vitality, that Antinomianism moulted, and turned into Familism. The stanch Captain Underhill, a famous Low Country soldier, and one of our leaders in the Pequot war, when afterwards brought under durance for his heresies and for the immoralities growing out of them, went the whole length of avowing all the worst tenets of both sects. He averred that "he had lain under a spirit of bondage and a legal way five years, and could get no assurance [of his being justified] till at length, as he was taking a pipe of tobacco, the Spirit sent home an absolute promise of free grace with such assurance and joy, as he never since doubted of his good estate, neither should he, though he should fall into sin." This last clause was by no means without meaning in his case, as he afterwards freely confessed the guilt of the foulest immoralities with which he was

charged, and he was also brought to doubt most painfully concerning "his good estate." \*

The evils of heresy and contention were now aggravated by a spirit of censoriousness, personality, and slander. The members of the Boston church roamed about among the other churches, and listened to the ministers only to criticise and ridicule. The small artillery of popular discourse and remark kept open wounds between friends. This offensive battery is graphically described by Welde, the minister of Roxbury. "Now, after our sermons were ended at our public lectures, you might have seen half a dozen pistols discharged at the face of the preacher." Winthrop says it was "as common to distinguish between men as being under a covenant of grace, or a covenant of works, as in other countries between Protestants and Papists." It was not strange that several persons in the colony actually "fell distracted."

What especially grieved some of the ministers was the fact, that persons, who had received religious impressions from them in their former parishes in England, had been by them turned from sin, and, not being able to endure their absence, had followed them, in the devotion of love, to the wilderness, were now estranged in their affec-

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 270.

tions, professed they had received no good from their preaching, and even maligned their benefactors. Nothing but a zeal, which was holier than passion, retained some of the ministers to this thankless service.

The ministers assembled in conference during the session of the Court which met March 9th, 1637; and, such was the all-absorbing interest of the controversy, they agreed to put off all lectures for three weeks, and bring the matter to some issue. In the Court the great majority was, from the beginning to the conclusion of the strife, in strong opposition to the new opinions, which reigned supreme in the Boston church. Mrs. Hutchinson was sustained by the powerful though questionable influence of Governor Vane, by the pulpit gifts and the kindred affection of Wheelwright, and by a measure of sympathy from the "famous John Cotton." By the open or indirect agency of these four advocates, the whole metropolis of the colony was set in opposition to the ministers and deputies of the other towns. In the Court, therefore, Winthrop and Wilson found their sole comfort. The speech, which Wilson had made during the last session, was at this session approved; and the record of this approval, together with the case of an infliction upon a private individual for contempt, makes up the only reference in the court book at this time to a



subject which engaged more attention than all others.\*

Mr. Edward Rawson, the secretary of the Court, was exceedingly chary of recording what he might have supposed would have won no posthumous honor to his pen. We learn from Winthrop, that the treatment which had been visited upon Wilson for his speech led the Court to ask advice from the ministers, as to its authority in things which concerned the churches. They agreed that no member of the Court ought to be questioned for any speech made there, by the church, unless the Court granted the church leave; because the Court might have reasons in secrets of state for extending this protection to its members; the ministers also agreed that the Court might proceed against all heresies and errors of a church member, without waiting for the church to deal with him, except when those heresies and errors were of a doubtful character, in which case they should first be referred to the church. From the attempt which was made to fix upon the prime mover of the proceedings against Wilson, and from other casual hints, it would seem that one who could not well be named, though he sat at the Court, was significantly pointed at. In other

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\* "The Court did approve of Mr. Wilson's speech, in their judgments." Court Records, Vol. I., under date.

words, Governor Vane was the object of quiet censure.

The case just referred to was that of Stephen Greensmith, who, in the words of the record, "for affirming that all the ministers (except Mr. Cotton, Mr. Wheelwright, and, he thought, Mr. Hooker) did teach a covenant of works, was for a time committed to the marshal, and after enjoined to make acknowledgment to the satisfaction of every congregation, and was fined forty pounds, and standeth bound in one hundred pounds till this be done, both the satisfaction be given to the ministers and the churches, and the court be satisfied for the fine." Failing to appear, he forfeited his recognizances and was afterwards committed, being the first of the free talkers among the great public upon whom the legal penalties of the controversy were visited. It was in vain that he appealed to the King.\*

Mr. Wheelwright was called up before this Court, and questioned about the sermon which he had preached upon the Fast in January, as tending to contempt and sedition. It being known that this measure was intended, nearly all the members of the Boston church offered a petition to the Court, requesting that as freemen they might be present in cases of judicature, and also desiring

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\* Court Records.

the Court to declare whether it had power, in cases of conscience, to act before the church had acted. This petition or remonstrance was, in view of the circumstances, "taken as a groundless and presumptuous act," and was rejected, with the answer, that the Court, when acting judicially, was always open, but, for consultation and preparation in causes, might and would be private. Mr. Wheelwright's sermon was then produced, and its doctrine was justified by him. Read by us at the present day, with a knowledge of the passions then at work, it is easy to understand how it gave offence; but it can be called seditious only by construction, being for the most part composed of Scripture references, of exhortations founded upon them, and of answers to objections. The text (Matthew ix. 15) indicates the general drift of the discourse, which was, the true meaning, method, and uses of fasting among Christians, largely illustrated by Old Testament passages.

After this foundation is well laid, a transition is made to the great points then at issue, as defined by the covenant of grace and the covenant of works. In this part of the discourse, spiritual fires and burnings, holy warfare, figurative armor and battles, with an occasional reference to the dangers in church and commonwealth, which are to be boldly risked for the sake of Christ's truth, constitute the matter upon which the charge of a

sedition was based. As already said, this charge could be sustained only by drawing inferences at a venture, and by imputing to Wheelwright sentiments held literally, though expressed by figures. At any other time, and under different circumstances, no hearer would have thought of putting such a construction on the sermon. Indeed, each of the whole of the first generation of ministers, who came hither, had probably said more in their English pulpits, which might have been charged as seditious, than Wheelwright said here. The sermon pronounced some stringent censures upon those who walked by a covenant of works, or maintained that sanctification was an evidence of justification.

The ministers being called, they alleged that they maintained this doctrine; and so, by syllogistic reasoning, Wheelwright was, after a long debate, found guilty of sedition and contempt, his offence being aggravated by his having employed an occasion designed to heal all differences as a means for kindling and increasing them.\* Governor Vane and some few other

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\* A large portion of what appears to be the original manuscript of this discourse is preserved in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society. An endorsement says, "that it was left in the hands of Mr. John Coggeshall, who was a deacon of the church in Boston." A perfect copy of the sermon is likewise in the possession of the Society,

members of the Court dissented from the judgment against Wheelwright, and sent in a protest, which, because it wholly justified him, the Court refused to receive. A large part of the church in Boston likewise sent in a remonstrance or petition to the Court, alleging their grief at this proceeding against Wheelwright; asserting that there was nothing of sedition in the preacher, the doctrine, or the approvers of this discourse; suggesting that the fear of sedition might be but a method of the old serpent, "the ancient enemy of free grace," and advising the rulers to consider the danger of meddling against the prophets of God.\*

No action was taken at the time upon this afterwards famous petition. It bore powerful names upon it, and the Court probably showed no little policy in waiting for what even Winthrop calls "a fair opportunity." The paper was hastily drawn up when the judgment of the

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received from the State-House, and bound in the first volume of Hutchinson's Papers. Doubtless many copies of it were taken, besides the notes, or "heads," which many of our ancestors were wont to treasure with the zeal which the Romanist fixes upon relics.

\* This "Remonstrance" is given by Welde, in his pamphlet, p. 21, and is thence copied by Savage into his Appendix to the first volume of his invaluable edition of Winthrop.

Court against Wheelwright was made known. Sentence against him was also deferred. The Court inquired of the ministers whether it might enjoin silence upon him; but they, not being clear on that point, advised that he should be commended to the care of the Boston church, which was done, he being enjoined to appear at the next Court.

The state of feeling in Boston may easily be imagined. In the strife about the two covenants of grace and works, the people, the ministers, and the rulers, appear to have well nigh slipped from under the influence of either. Boston was the head-quarters of Mrs. Hutchinson's force. She had forsaken the public assembly when Wheelwright was proceeded against, and had in fact set up an assembly of her own. The Court felt itself in Boston as in the state of *imperium in imperio*, and was moreover greatly incensed against the majority of the church, and of course of the influential people of the town, on account of the remonstrance or petition. It therefore being desirable to escape from the overwhelming forces of male and female tongues, a motion was made that the next Court of Elections should be held at Newtown, (Cambridge.) Governor Vane refused to put the question to vote. Deputy-Governor Winthrop, as he lived in Boston, was disinclined to put the question unless the Court

required it; so the service was laid upon Mr. Endicott, of Salem, and the motion was carried.

The spirit of discord wrought in manifold ways which have not been chronicled. Historic fancy can however fill in the touches, which will give expression and reality to the well defined features of the great picture. One little incident, that implies very much, is recorded. The church of Concord kept a day of humiliation at Cambridge on the 6th of April, 1637, for the ordination of elders. From this ceremony, Vane, Cotton, Wheelwright, and all the Boston church of any note, absented themselves, as they would not be concerned in the ordination of legal preachers, as they accounted Bulkeley and Jones. The colonization of Connecticut by people from Massachusetts was largely advanced, at this period, by the dread of the Antinomian influences which prevailed in and around Boston.

The Court met at Cambridge, on the 17th of May, 1637, when rare and shameful scenes were enacted, the grave and sober Pilgrims being presented in a most ridiculous plight. It is not recorded that any blows were absolutely inflicted; but the technical import of "assault and battery" was fulfilled beyond the letter, and far into the spirit, as, while warm words and angry epithets were exchanged, the conflicting brethren laid hands upon each other. The people of the other



towns besides Boston had repented of the choice of the youthful Vane for Governor, and discovered the mistake into which they had been led by their enthusiasm. This devoted champion of Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson, besides all his private influence, embarrassed the proceedings of the Court. The electors assembled with the determination to eject him, that they might restore the well approved Winthrop. The session commenced at one o'clock, and Vane insisted upon opening the proceedings by reading a petition from Boston. The petition was about "the pretence of liberty," though it looked askance towards revoking the proceedings against Wheelwright, and would have occupied the whole day in debate.

Winthrop opposed the reading as out of order, elections being the chief and the first business. Others sustained him in his opposition. But Vane, with a few to support him, insisted upon reading the petition; and, after much waste of time and dire confusion, the large majority, upon division, was for election. Still Vane would not yield, till the tumult so increased that he left his place and departed. The assembly being in the open air, upon a warm day, the Reverend Mr. Wilson mounted into a tree, and from the branches of the same offered the first example in this country of a kind of eloquence which,

having a lower theme than he had, is satisfied with a stump. His speech had its effect. Winthrop was chosen Governor; Dudley, deputy; the other assistants or magistrates were all taken from among those, who "owned a covenant of works," and Vane, Coddington, and Dummer, of the opposite party, were left out. This election, from which the so called Antinomians had expected, through the influence of the country deputies, a decisive triumph, resulted in their defeat. The Boston people had delayed sending their deputies to the Court, until the election should have been concluded; but the discomfited party went home warm from the strife, and the next morning sent to the Court, as their representatives, Vane, Coddington, and Hough, all zealous friends of Mrs. Hutchinson.

Irritated by this defiance, the Court found means for refusing to receive them, on the plea that two of the freemen of Boston had not legal notice of the election. The deputies returned home; but the resolute citizens of the metropolis, setting an example which their descendants have never yet disgraced, made a new choice, and returned the same three gentlemen the next morning, the Court being compelled to receive them. Even the honored Winthrop was made, for a season, to bear some personal slights in Boston. The sergeants had been wont to attend Vane as Gov-

ernor to and from the courts and public worship, but they laid down their halberds and went home. It being a voluntary service on the part of the sergeants, they could not be compelled to it; and though the Court offered to provide for Winthrop the honor of the four halberds, he was content to take two of his own servants for the work.

The fact, that there was no press in the country at this time, was probably an essential relief to the controversy and the people. But numerous writings were penned and circulated. The magistrates put forth an apology to justify their proceedings against Wheelwright. His friends issued a remonstrance, in which, as Winthrop says, they garbled the offensive sermon, and altered the sense of the objectionable passages. The same disingenuousness Winthrop charges upon "a small tractate" by Wheelwright upon the principal doctrine of his sermon. The other ministers replied to the sermon by a scriptural examination and "confutation" of it. This answer of theirs Mr. Cotton in turn examined, in order to present the differences, which he did "in a very narrow scantling." Mr. Shepherd, of Cambridge, preached the sermon to the newly elected magistrates, and reduced the differences to a still more compact compass, so that only the most acute

persons could discern where the parties disagreed.

Winthrop very judiciously remarks that a reconciliation would have been easy, "if men's affections had not been formerly alienated, when the differences were formerly stated as fundamental." Readers shall have the benefit of seeing, in Winthrop's own words, how close the parties came together. "In these particulars they agreed; first, that justification and sanctification were both together in time; second, that a man must know himself to be justified before he can know himself to be sanctified; third, that the Spirit never witnesseth justification without a word and a work." There are those to whom this harmony is intelligible. A smaller number, however, will understand the difference, which was, "whether the first assurance be by an absolute promise always, and not by a conditional also, and whether a man could have any true assurance, without sight of some such work in his soul as no hypocrite could attain unto."\* The difference is by no means trifling, for it enters into and constitutes two distinct systems even of Christian faith.

Mr. Wheelwright appeared, as enjoined, to

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 221.

receive a sentence which, as may well be conceived, the Court was reluctant to pass. Advantage was taken of a day of humiliation about to be observed, as a preparation for a Synod which was soon to follow, to respite him until August. The Court, having now full power, wished to show some magnanimity, and to prove that "the tumultuous course, and divers insolent speeches," which it encountered, did not move it to crush a crippled foe. A suggestion was made to Wheelwright, that it might be well for him to win mercy by retracting his expressions. He replied, that if he had been guilty of sedition, he ought to be put to death, and that if he was proceeded against, he should appeal to the King's Court, as he would retract nothing. The Court was equally firm, alleging that if judgment were had in his case again, it would be the same, but that if the synod should give any new light upon the matter, it would be gladly embraced. It was at this Court that Massachusetts provided one hundred and sixty men to go forth in the expedition against the Pequots. The leader and the chaplain were chosen by lot. We learn from Welde, that even this enterprise against a common enemy was affected by the agitation caused by Mrs. Hutchinson. The lot falling upon Wilson as chaplain, none of the "choice members"

of Boston would accompany him, or even bid him farewell.\*

There being at this time reason to fear, that the Antinomian party would receive a reënforcement from members of a church in England under the ministry of Mr. Brierly, an order was passed that no town or person should receive any stranger resorting hither with intent to reside in this jurisdiction, or allow any lot or habitation to any such, without permission of one of the council, or two others of the magistrates.† This order is one evidence among many which appear on our records, that our fathers never meditated the free opening of their patented and purchased territory as a place of refuge to all sorts of consciences, but designed it, as a man designs his house, as a place of peace, comfort, and discipline, for those who are of one mind, and feeling, and interest. Our fathers are often judged as if they cherished the former purpose; a principle which they never recognized is set up for them, and then they are condemned for not acting by it.

That order of Court appears to us arbitrary. So it appeared to some of that day; but whether because of their liberality, or because it excluded their friends, it would be difficult to decide.

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\* Welde's *Short Story*, &c. p. 25.

† Court Records, Vol. I., under date.

Cotton was opposed to it, and, as will afterwards appear, meditated a removal from the jurisdiction, in company with Davenport. Governor Winthrop wrote a declaration of the intent and equity of the order, and defended it. To this, Vane wrote a reply, which, in turn, was followed by a rejoinder from Winthrop. These papers show considerable acumen of argument, and exhibit but little of the baser spirit of controversy, though by no means deficient in tartness. Estimated by the principles, which have been assured to our day by the heats and perplexities of a former age, Vane will appear to have had the nobler side; but by the principles religiously recognized at the time, Winthrop sustained his ground.\*

Vane and Coddington showed their temper or sense of injury in various ways, as, after their discomfiture at the election, might have been expected of them. They left the seats appropriated for the magistrates in public worship, which Vane had occupied from his first arrival, and took places with the deacons, though Winthrop sent to them desiring them to sit with him. On the day appointed for a Fast, on occasion of the Pequot war, they deserted the Boston con-

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\* These three documents are preserved in Hutchinson's valuable "Collection of Papers," pp. 67-100. They furnish an admirable illustration of the logic of the time.



gregation, and spent the day with Wheelwright at Mount Wollaston, listening to him. We may well imagine that while such freaks and distempers appeared among the magistrates, the ordinary sort of people would take their own peculiar way for showing their feelings.

The slights, which Winthrop received in Boston, were however made up in a measure by the honors which attended him in a summer tour through Lynn, Salem, and Ipswich, where the military and the people did him reverence beyond his wishes. He had much to endure in the place of his residence; and his magnanimity and Christian spirit are testified abundantly by his passionless record of daily occurrences. He relates with perfect calmness one insult put upon him, in proof of his remark that "the differences grew so much here, as tended fast to a separation." The young Lord Ley, not yet a man, son and heir of the Earl of Marlborough, arrived in Boston on the 26th of June, 1637, on a visit of curiosity and observation. Governor Winthrop invited Vane, in company with this honored youth, to dinner; but Vane not only refused, "alleging by letter that his conscience withheld him," but also at the same hour took Lord Ley to Noddle's Island to dine with Mr. Maverick.\*

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 232.

About this time, a brother of Mrs. Hutchinson, with some other friends of Mr. Wheelwright, arrived in Boston; and they being persons especially to be dreaded by the party in power, the recent order of Court about residence was made applicable to them. To save others from danger, Governor Winthrop gave them leave to sojourn four months, and this was the cause of increased contention.

On the 3d of August, 1637, Henry Vane and Lord Ley sailed for England. The partisans and friends of the late Governor made an occasion of his departure, large numbers waiting upon him to the boat, and some accompanying him in the boat to the ship out in the harbor, while volleys of shot and double salutes spoke defiance or reproach to his enemies in the compliment to himself. Winthrop remained at his place at the Court, and did not join in the parade, but had given order to the military officer to provide for the honorable dismissal of his temporary rival in the affections of the Bay colony.

It is pleasant to observe, that there is no record of any rancorous expression or uncourteous deed by Winthrop in relation to Vane. That the father of the Massachusetts colony felt keenly the treatment he had received, directly and indirectly, in church and state, on the account of

this young man, there can be no doubt; but he wisely concealed, or religiously controlled, the outward exhibition of his feeling. Nor did Vane bear any umbrage to the colony, from which he retired with less of regard and reverence than he received on being introduced to it. From his marked career either as a fanatic or apostle of freedom, as friend or foe may call him, and in his dismal fate on the scaffold, his character perplexes us, because it presents traits not usually found in men of public fame or political education. Lord Say and Seal lost his regard for Vane, or rather changed the character of that regard. But Vane, to the great credit of his real principles, found satisfaction in being, in England, the true friend of the colony.

No very critical eye or judgment is necessary to assure or persuade us that the departure of Vane was hailed as an inexpressible relief. We observe, that as soon as his powerful influence, whether openly or covertly exercised, was withdrawn, the opposers of Mrs. Hutchinson's party began to pursue their desired ends with more freedom. It is easy to found upon this fact a specification of a general charge of unfairness, which some may think it right to add to that of bigotry, against the Massachusetts government. But with the best light, which re-

search will throw on this controversy, a candid judgment will be likely to conclude, that no moral quality was disproportionably displayed by either party.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*The Synod at Cambridge in 1637. — Preparations for it. — Interest in it. — Proceedings. — Opinions adduced without Names. — Offence given. — Inferences from Mrs. Hutchinson's Opinions. — Errors confuted. — "Unsavory Speeches." — Mrs. Hutchinson and Mr. Wheelwright not satisfied or won over. — Decisions of the Ministers on several Questions. — Mr. Cotton changes his Course. — Result of the Synod. — Mr. John Higginson.*

THE conferences which had been already held among the ministers, in reference to the opinions identified with Mrs. Hutchinson, suggested the meeting of a larger number in a freer way, for the purpose of clearing up the grounds of variance. It was agreed that a Synod should be held, beginning on the 30th of August, 1637. Preparations of various kinds, but all tending

to the same result, that of giving extension and heat to the strife, were made for this Synod, the first assembly of the kind which the light of the sun ever shone upon in this western hemisphere. The twenty-fourth day of the month was observed by fasting and prayer throughout the churches of the jurisdiction. The ministers held many previous interviews and discussions together; and as they earnestly sought to acquaint themselves with each other's views, some advances were made towards reconciliation between Cotton, Wheelwright, and Wilson. The last professed, that in the speech by which he had given such offence, he did not refer to opinions expressed by the two former in the open congregations, but to opinions, which he specified, that had been privately uttered. He had indeed made the same disclaimer before; but it does not appear to have been fully received until this time, when it was thought so much of that Cotton referred to it in the public services, and it was allowed that the rest of Wilson's speech, considering the freedom of the Court, was inoffensive.

Another preparation for the Synod was the collecting together of the "erroneous opinions" which were in circulation over the country. This was a most injudicious and deplorable work. Their number was raised to eighty-two, and

would, probably, have gone much higher, had more time been allowed for raking them together, as such things increase in an arithmetical ratio. Mr. Wilson returned from the Pequot expedition, which had ended in ruin to that formidable tribe of savages; and Mr. Hooker and Mr. Stone, accompanying him, brought with them the scalps of the dreaded chiefs, so that one fear was now calmed. The famous Mr. Davenport, who had arrived in Boston on the 26th of June, made himself sufficiently acquainted with the controversy excited by Mrs. Hutchinson to preach the Thursday lecture, on the 17th of August, and to enter into the thickest of the strife. Mr. Cotton followed him with an exposition to prove, that, in undertaking any weighty business like war, the rulers should advise with the ministers, and instanced "David in the case of Ziglág." All these intended preparations for the Synod were aggravations of the controversy.

The Synod, or assembly, sat at Newtown, (Cambridge,) on Wednesday, the 30th of August, 1637, all the teachers and elders through the country, including some lately arrived but not settled, and the magistrates, being members of it. The session continued through three weeks, with open doors and full liberty of speech. Bulkeley and Hooker were the moderators throughout the long deliberation. The latter divine

had at first objected to the holding of such an assembly, as tending to more distraction, and to the consumption of time which could ill be spared; and he had recommended in its stead, that the questions in dispute should be sent over to some of the godly brethren in England. Mr. Shepherd, the minister of the town where the assembly was held, opened the deliberations with prayer. Probably a convention organized at the present day, for the reception of intelligence from the presumptive inhabitants of the moon, would not be regarded with a more intense and consuming anxiety, than was this New England Synod by the high-wrought zeal of our devout fathers.

After the choice of the moderators, the erroneous opinions which were in circulation over the country, and which had been previously gathered together, were read, as also the texts of Scripture which were abused to their support, and certain "unsavory speeches," which had been uttered in the course of the previous agitations. Eighty-two erroneous opinions constituted the list, they being principally inferences which the ingenuity of the ministers could draw from Mrs. Hutchinson's prominent views, or rash and ill-advised extremes of sentiment, which one or another individual had been heard to express. The array and specification of such a host of errors, often boldly stated, that they might lose



nothing of their repulsiveness to the orthodox, and not ascribed to any individuals by name, gave great offence to some who were obnoxious to censure, as if all these errors were ascribed to them. They complained that the colony was brought under great reproach by such a hideous catalogue of unclaimed and unappropriated theological notions, and they demanded that the names of the individuals, who respectively held them, should be declared.

To this demand it was replied, that it could be proved that all these errors were professed by some in the country, and that, as the Synod was held in regard to opinions, and not to persons, there was no need of appropriating them to individuals, or of giving names. Still, a great clamor was raised that the witnesses, the evidence, and the advocates of these opinions, should be brought forward; and nothing but a threat that a magistrate would interfere if the order of the assembly was disturbed, brought the offended party to a measure of restraint. Some members of the Boston church, with their friends, protested against the policy which thus attempted to bring their cherished opinions into contempt by merging them in a hateful fellowship; and they left the assembly in indignation.

The drawing of inferences was, from first to last, the aggravation of this controversy. This

list of eighty-two floating errors seems, as we should judge, to have been made out for the sake of drawing dangerous conclusions from the few simple and well defined sentiments, which were held by Mrs. Hutchinson and her brother. The ministers saw or apprehended these conclusions, and they took this method of making clear to the mass of the people matters which they did not understand, but on account of which they were ready to fight. Though no large or full exhibition has been made in these pages of the religious opinions held with such clearness, and put forth with such power, by Mrs. Hutchinson, yet the reader, relieved of what might be wearisome details, will understand that her leading idea was, that a work wrought by the Spirit of God within the breast was the all-essential thing to witness a state of justification; and that outward methods, graces, and virtues, could be no substitute for this, were secondary, and comparatively unimportant, and might, indeed, if stress were laid upon them, delude a professor into a fatal error about his state.

Good as well as bad inferences might be drawn from this leading tenet; but it is observable, that by far the larger number of the "eighty-two erroneous opinions" are such as she would never have uttered, though some of her followers might have felt bound, in adherence to supposed con-

sistency, to abide by them. It is evident on the whole, that in that list her views are caricatured, ungenerously represented, and to all intents and purposes perverted. We find in the list such alleged errors as the following. "Error 16. There is no difference between the graces of hypocrites and believers, in the kinds of them." "Error 22. None are to be exhorted to believe, but such whom we know to be the elect of God, or to have his Spirit in them effectually." "Error 39. The due search and knowledge of the Holy Scripture is not a safe and sure way of searching and finding Christ." "Error 43. The Spirit acts most in the saints when they endeavor least." "Error 59. A man may not be exhorted to any duty, because he hath no power to do it." "Error 64. A man must take no notice of his sin, nor of his repentance for his sin." "Error 76. The devil and nature may be cause of a gracious work."

Such conclusions as these might have been drawn to infinity from the leading sentiment which Mrs. Hutchinson, even during the sitting of the assembly, continued to inculcate in her attractive meetings in Boston. But with equal or even less ingenuity, conclusions might have been drawn looking to an opposite tendency, advocating self-communion, devout meditation,

an ordering of the inner thoughts, a cleansing of the breast, in which, as a temple, the Spirit of God doth dwell, and pure and frequent worship within the chambers of the soul. It cannot, however, be denied or put out of sight by a candid umpire, that Mrs. Hutchinson did maintain some dangerous and alarming opinions, which she advanced likewise in a way to wound the feelings of some devout and faithful Christians, to obstruct the success of their labors, to resist the force of their teachings, and to lead those willing to err into foolish and ruinous delusions. Doubtless she felt some grievances of the same sort from those, who withstood her unintermitted exhortations and prophesyings.

The first week of the session of the assembly was spent in discussing these erroneous opinions, conclusions, or inferences, with constant references to the "unsavory speeches," which kept them company. Texts of Scripture, with brief and condensed arguments, were set down after each specified heresy. The condemnation of the errors was subscribed by nearly all the elders and delegates of the churches; but some who assented to the condemnation would not take part in the *subscription*, which was to them "a word of ill sound."

The errors were then condensed and classified

under a few general heads, first nine, then five, then three. These were debated for a fortnight, the arguments being prepared in the forenoon, and presented in the afternoon, in writing. This was in fact a protracted disputation between Wheelwright and Cotton on the one part, and the other ministers upon the other part. It is evident that, Wheelwright being regarded as incorrigible, the ministers spent their efforts on Cotton. Five questions relating to the connection between sanctification and justification were put to him; the Synod replied to his answers to these questions; he examined these replies; and the Synod closed with rejoinders. Thus Cotton was at last brought to a show of accordance with his brethren. Winthrop gives the five points of agreement, which it is not necessary to copy, because, if they are not unintelligible, it may safely be said that there is not a man or a woman in Massachusetts, who would be afraid to risk salvation for time and eternity, as far as they are concerned, upon either view of them. But neither the sister nor the brother was won.\*

The last day of the assembly was occupied in the discussion of four subsidiary questions, which the controversy had made important. These

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 239.

questions are signified by the decisions upon them, which were as follows. Though it was thought allowable for a few women, meeting together, to pray and edify one another, yet such meetings as Mrs. Hutchinson held in Boston, where, before a large company, she statedly exercised "in a prophetic way" upon doctrines and expositions, were declared disorderly and without rule. It was agreed that a private member, by permission of the elders, might wisely and sparingly put a question for information after sermon; but criticisms and bitter reproaches, like to what prevailed, were utterly condemned. It was decided that a person refusing to come and receive the censure of his church might be proceeded against in his absence, though it was thought better that his presence should be compelled by the magistrate. Lastly, the assembly determined that a church member had no right to absent himself from the ordinances, where he belonged, on account of an opinion not fundamental; and that his church might deny him a dismission to any other, if he sought to go merely on account of that opinion.

. These four decisions show us very significantly what sort of extra and secondary grievances mingled with the dispute about the two covenants. Before the breaking up of the assembly,

Governor Winthrop, deserted for the moment by his guardian angel of good discretion, suggested, in view of the peaceable and comfortable conclusion of the Synod, that such a one be held once a year, or at least the next year, to settle what remained, "or if but to nourish love." The motion was liked, but not concluded. He also proposed that the ministers, who were differently maintained, should point out the rule most agreeable to the gospel for the manner of their support. This they prudently declined, lest their interested concern should be misconstrued. Mr. Davenport preached an appropriate concluding sermon, summing up the purpose and results of the assembly, on the text, Philip. iii. 16. The expenses of the members of the assembly were borne by public charge, as were those of the ministers and elders who came from Connecticut. The 12th day of October following was observed in all the churches as a day of thanksgiving, for the defeat of the Pequots and the success of the Synod; but because of the latter designation, many of Boston kept away from the exercises.

Thus ended the first ecclesiastical convention in New England, an occasion which but few of that soil would now number among its historic honors, though in moral characteristics it certainly fell not one whit below the ancient or modern



councils which constitute themselves the representatives of Christ's church. In one sense it wholly failed of its object; indeed, it failed in every other sense, save in that it deepened the lines and raised the walls of division; and by defining where the balance of power lay, made preparation for the subsequent civil proceedings, the interference of temporal power, without which an ecclesiastical tribunal is but little dreaded, and accomplishes even less.

The writer of this sketch has, by good fortune, fallen upon a loose paper which gives evidence that even the magistrates and ministers, after due deliberation, cared not to make public the journal of the Synod. This paper is a petition from Mr. John Higginson, son of the Salem minister, and afterwards of Guilford, Connecticut, by which it appears that he was employed by the magistrates and ministers to take down in short hand all the debates and proceedings of the Synod. He performed the work faithfully, and having written out the voluminous record, "at the expense of much time and pains," he presented it to the Court in May, 1639. The long time that elapsed may indicate the labor. The Court accepted it, and ordered that if approved by the ministers, after they had viewed it, it should be printed, Mr. Higginson being entitled to the

profits, which were estimated as promising a hundred pounds. The writer waited with patience while his brethren examined it, and freely took their advice. Some were in favor of printing it; but others advised to the contrary, "conceiving it might possibly be an occasion of further disputes and differences both in this country and other parts of the world." The writer himself having scruples, he did not dare to print, though he had an offer of fifty pounds, but delivered it to the Court again, in May 1641; and as the magistrates and ministers concluded that it would not be wise to give the document to the world, he asked for remuneration, and modestly hinted at the offer of fifty pounds. A promise was made to him, that the case should be considered when the treasury was in better condition. He renewed his petition on the 9th of August, 1643.\* I can find no evidence on the record that his labor was ever remunerated by a public grant.

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\* This petition may now be found among the bound papers in the State House, Boston, in the first volume of papers labelled "Ecclesiastical," p. 186.

## CHAPTER VII.

*The Contentions increase. — Mrs. Hutchinson continues her Meetings. — The Court resolves, upon favoring Circumstances, to act decisively. — The Remonstrance from the Boston Church. — Treatment of the Boston Deputies. — Mr. Wheelwright again before the Court. — His Examination and Defence. — His Sentence. — Action of the Court against several Individuals who justified the Remonstrance.*

NEW developments of trouble and opposition continued to show to the authorities of Massachusetts, if they would but have seen it, the sad impolicy of their first intermeddling in a controversy, begun in the sitting-room of a nimble-witted female, and engaged with the abstrusities of metaphysical divinity. Of course something of pacification might have been looked for, as the result of the assembly, had its deliberations been pursued with moderation and concession. Some effect must have been produced upon the minds of the new party, who acknowledged the rule of church organization. But Mrs. Hutchinson's friends had been driven in indignation from the assembly at its very opening hour, by having their views slanderously, as they thought, turned

out, in indiscriminate confusion, from a perfect dragnet of erroneous and unsavory notions, to which any scoffer or fanatic might contribute one or more. She, therefore, with Wheelwright and her other zealous friends, though "clearly confuted and confounded in the assembly," still resolutely maintained all her expressed opinions, and added to them. Her disciples used all their energies to propagate her sentiments, in spite of the bitter alienations and the dire confusion which ensued, and though they knew of the reserved force by which the magistrates could back their ecclesiastical decree. Mr. Cotton henceforward, having learned better the spirit of the majority of his flock, or foreseeing ruin from their tendencies, or being turned from some convictions which he once shared with them, or making a sacrifice of principle to some lower motive, to whatever cause charity or rigid justice may ascribe the fact, Mr. Cotton henceforward ceased to be the adviser or the advocate of Mrs. Hutchinson. He never became her enemy; nor, as far as can be discovered now, did any one who was ever her friend.

Mrs. Hutchinson continued her meetings, and Mr. Wheelwright his preaching, both maintaining that the difference between them and their opponents was as wide as between heaven and hell; and their friends would scornfully turn

their backs upon any preacher of a "covenant of works." Mr. Wilson, both on account of his place and his views, received the most of this insulting treatment. The magistrates and the leaders out of Boston were certainly not unmindful of these irritations, though they chose to find, in the apprehensions of popular tumult, and even of public hostilities, a reason for taking some salutary and decisive measures just at this moment. They alleged that a remedy might soon be too late, and they were favored now by a peculiar advantage, if they could reconcile it to their consciences to use it.

Mr. Welde does not scruple to refer the opportunity, now presented to the Court, to "a special providence." Vane was expected, according to his promise once given, to return, but his powerful influence was now withdrawn. Cotton could not be counted upon by one party above the other. Many of Mrs. Hutchinson's friends, seeming to have a presentiment of what awaited them, meditated a removal from the jurisdiction, and had gone in various directions to look for a new settlement. The Court sitting on the 2d of November, 1637, resolved to make the remonstrance, which had been hastily drawn up and presented by more than sixty members of the Boston church, after the judgment against Wheelwright on the 9th of March preceding,

the occasion of a civil process. The remonstrance or petition, like the sermon which it justified, could be made seditious only by construction. The violence of this construction, or at least the forced reasoning which detected sedition, will serve to show how much real alarm of tumult existed, or how determined the authorities were to put down the agitators. The remonstrance, in deprecating the charge of sedition by "the effects of Mr. Wheelwright's doctrine upon the hearers," said, "it hath not stirred up sedition in us, not so much as by accident. We have not drawn the sword, as sometimes Peter did, rashly, neither have we rescued our innocent brother, as sometimes the Israelites did Jonathan; and yet they did not seditiously." These allusions the Court chose to regard as tending to sedition, as suggesting sedition, by putting disaffected persons in mind that it was possible for them to draw the sword, if they should please to do so.

It is difficult to refrain from passing a most severe censure upon the whole proceedings of the Court in reference to this remonstrance. If there were any circumstances, open or covert, which at the time could offer the least palliation for the measures adopted, they have escaped the search of the writer; nor can it be believed that any such existed. Failing these, the Court can-

not be relieved of a very severe judgment when its course is reviewed. There were indeed many passionate expressions of dissatisfaction, and even of defiance, on the part of individuals; there may have been also intimations of a breach of the civil peace. It would have been strange, if the heady and the ill-advised had retained a perfect self-control amid such intense excitement as at this season prevailed. But no single examples of contempt, or of threatened resistance to authority, can be admitted as a justification of the tyrannical measures now pursued. In fact, it was only by a most unwarranted and wholly unprecedented departure from the usual forms observed in a legislative assembly, that the Court now in session could make any use of the remonstrance. It had been presented, not to this Court, but to a former Court, which had met on the 9th of April, preceding by seven months the present session, and which had been presided over by a different Governor, and composed of different members. If the petition or remonstrance was insulting, the Court which it insulted was the proper body to have proceeded upon it. The new Court, meeting in November, had nothing more to do with it, unless it was presented anew, (which it was not,) than had any other court which has met in Massachusetts from that day to this.



A significant hint dropped by Mr. Welde may do much towards explaining the unwonted proceedings of the Court. He says, that when all the various means had been applied for repressing the opinions of Mrs. Hutchinson, "this was another means of their subduing, some of the leaders being down, and others gone." This is another evidence, that the return of Vane to England, and "the Special Providence" by which some of the disaffected were absent seeking a new home, enabled the Court to do what it either could not, or would not have done, under different circumstances. It seems to have been well understood, at this time, that a separation of the conflicting elements must, in some way, be brought about. The Court tasked its ingenuity to discover that way. Indeed, we have good authority for believing that Governor Winthrop had sought by private persuasion to bring about the end, which was gained by arbitrary public proceedings. Winthrop had asked Vane and his friends, after the late election, to move away from the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, and Roger Williams had been applied to for the enlistment of his services in providing a refuge for "the Antinomians." \*

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\* My authority for this assertion is *Bailey*, who says in his "Dissuasive from the Errors of the Times," pp. 63 and 72, that Roger Williams, on a visit to England, made this statement to him.

Governor Winthrop likewise overcharges and misrepresents the remonstrance, when he speaks of it as containing "divers scandalous and seditious speeches."\* The document is respectful, and even deferential; nothing could be more pertinent to the occasion, or contain less of irrelevant matter. More than sixty names of male members of the Boston church were subscribed to it, and it was besides approved by some who did not subscribe it, as will soon appear. Some of the signers soon withdrew their names, either from change of mind, or through dread of consequences. Of these a few alleged, that the paper had been presented to them suddenly in a rough state, some passages being apparently erased, and that they understood that it was not to be delivered to the Court without the approval of Mr. Cotton, which it did not have.

Mr. William Aspinwall, just returned to the Court as one of the representatives of Boston, had written the remonstrance, though the Court was ignorant of this fact when it questioned him for having signed it. He fully justified the document, and was at once dismissed. Mr. John Coggeshall, another Boston representative, and a deacon of the church, had not signed the petition; but upon the ejectment of Aspinwall he stoutly told the Court it had better treat him

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 245.

in the same way, as he approved the remonstrance, and had already put his name to a protest. So he was dismissed, with a summons to Boston to choose two new representatives. Mr. William Coddington, treasurer of the colony, the third member from Boston, then presented a protest from his constituents against the measures pursued in reference to Mr. Wheelwright, and the alien law, forbidding residence, already referred to. This led to a review of the proceedings and a justification of them all; and the papers growing out of the alien law, which had been kept in during the Synod, were made public.\*

The Boston people assembled in indignation, and were about returning to the Court the two deputies who had just been rejected, the voters being then the church members only. But Mr. Cotton interfered, knowing what tumult must have followed, and he prevented their intention. Of the two members who were returned, however, one was an earnest disciple of Mrs. Hutchinson, and had also signed the petition; and as he justified it when questioned, the Court dismissed him likewise, with a warrant for another choice, to which the Boston church members gave no heed.

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\* These papers are the same as are noticed above, on page 245.

Mr. Wheelwright, the great champion of Mrs. Hutchinson, and, as such, the prominent representative of her party, was then called before the Court for a final and decisive action on his case. There was a fixed purpose on the part of the government, either to bring him to an apology and recantation, or to clear the jurisdiction of his presence. This being the determined end at which all the measures aimed, it must have given a character to all the proceedings, though it would appear that Wheelwright was treated with all the scanty forbearance and moderation, which would consist with the purpose of the Court. He was reminded that some time had passed since a judgment had been found against him, as guilty of sedition and contempt; and that sentence had been deferred from Court to Court, in the hope that he would either change his mind, or submit to its decision. He replied, that he was innocent of sedition or contempt; that he had preached nothing but the truth of Christ, and that the dangerous application of his doctrine was made by others, not by himself.

The Court, in its expostulation with him, went very fully and particularly into a detail of the grievances, which had followed upon Mrs. Hutchinson's teachings, and his own support of her views. He had in his sermon, as was alleged, pointed very significantly to the magistrates and

the ministers of the colony, as being under a covenant of works; he had put an evil mark upon them; had lowered the esteem of the people for them; though, by conference with them, he had previously been informed of the false and insulting character of his aspersions.

What added, in the view of the Court, to the objectionable character of the sermon, was, that it wholly omitted all note of the occasions for which the day had been set apart. Mr. Cotton had performed the regular afternoon exercises, when Mr. Wheelwright, as he had probably been previously informed that he should be, was called upon "to exercise as a private brother," and he by this sermon directly opposed the impression of Mr. Cotton's sermon, which was an attempt to pacify and soothe the excited feelings of the people. He and his sister had entirely subverted the "peaceable and comely order" of the colony; they had excluded from admission to church communion all, who could not claim the witness of an immediate revelation for their justification, and had brought those in the church who differed from them into disesteem; they had divided families, and alienated friends, and had impeded the success of the war against the Pequots; they had extolled the former Governor, and some of the magistrates, as friends of free grace,

and had defamed the present Governor and magistrates as persecutors and antichrists; the consequence of which was, that Governor Winthrop was openly insulted, and that not even a town meeting could be held without railing speeches.

Reference was then made to the means, which the Court had used to win Wheelwright from his opinions and course, the numerous conferences, the Synod, and a declaration put forth by the Court, which he had not even condescended to read. The conclusion of this expostulation was, that all "troublers of families" should be driven out, as were "Cain, Hagar, and Ishmael;" and that the claims of justice and peace made this course all the more necessary in the present case, because, as Mrs. Hutchinson's party had asserted, the difference between them and their opponents was as wide as that between heaven and hell. Night came on while the Court in vain endeavored to bring Wheelwright to admit his alleged errors. The business was entered upon the next day, when he found some few supporters, and again denied the charge of direct or indirect sedition. He was finally sentenced to be disfranchised and banished from the jurisdiction, as "guilty for troubling the civil peace, both for his seditious sermon, and for his corrupt and dangerous opin-

ions, and for his contemptuous [i. e. unyielding] behavior in divers courts formerly, and now obstinately maintaining and justifying his said errors and offences." \*

Mr. Wheelwright was ordered to be kept in safe custody, and to give security for his departure. The Court refused to accept his appeal to the King, and he in turn refused to enter into recognizances for his quiet departure. The next morning, however, he withdrew his appeal, and offered to accept of simple banishment, though he would not promise to refrain from preaching, as the Court required, during the interval extending to the close of March ensuing, which was the date fixed for his removal, after the severity of the winter should be passed. He was at last allowed to return to his own home, upon his promise that if he did not leave the jurisdiction within fourteen days, he would surrender himself as a prisoner to a magistrate.

It is some relief to the disagreeable detail of the proceedings of this Court, in its condemnation of Mr. Wheelwright, to be able to record the fact that the decision against him was not unanimous. Some of the magistrates and deputies did not concur, and requested that their dissent from the majority might be entered in the Court book.

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\* Welde's *Short Story*, p. 26.



Their request was refused, on the ground that such a course was unusual and unallowable. The disaffected minority then offered a protest, which was likewise refused, because it justified Mr. Wheelwright as a faithful minister, and condemned the Court. They were finally allowed merely to copy the record of the sentence, and to subjoin to it their names, as dissenting, without passing any reflection upon the act of the majority. Indeed, there was a large number of dissentients in and out of the Court, and it was found necessary to issue an apology for its proceedings.

Before passing from the brother to the sister, Mrs. Hutchinson, the Court proceeded to deal with those who had put their hands to, or approved of, the offensive remonstrance. Deacon Coggeshall was called to account for several troublesome and reproachful deeds and words, and stood strenuously for liberty and justice. A large number of the Court wished to banish him, but he escaped with an admonition.

William Aspinwall was next put under examination. The Court had discovered, since last dealing with him, that he had drawn up the remonstrance, which, as it originally came from his hand, contained many more offensive passages, that were stricken out. He still justified it with manliness and plainness, alleging the right of

petition in general, and the examples of Mephibosheth and Esther in particular. He would have escaped with the same punishment as Deacon Coggeshall, but for the aggravation of his "peremptory speeches," which drew upon him disfranchisement and banishment at the close of the ensuing March. Two of the sergeants of Boston, William Baulston, and Edward Hutchinson, son of the prophetess, who had neglected to do Winthrop the honor they had done to Vane, and were prominent in the strife of words, were fined and disfranchised. Thomas Marshall, the Cambridge ferryman, who about this time must have had a brisk business, justified the petition, though with more mildness, and he escaped with losing his place and being disfranchised. William Dinely and William Dyer, for the same offence, were disfranchised, as was also Richard Gridley, "an honest, poor man, but very apt to meddle in public affairs beyond his calling or skill." \* Thus the way was prepared for civil proceedings against her, who "had been the breeder and nourisher of all these distempers."

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\* Welde's *Short Story*, p. 31.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The Trial of Mrs. Hutchinson before the Court of Massachusetts. — The Magistrates and Ministers. — Proceedings. — The Charges against her. — Her Replies. — Her Assemblies. — Her Contempt of the Ministers. — Their Evidence. — Her "Revelations," her Condemnation and Sentence. — Captain Underhill disfranchised. — Order for disarming the Majority of the Boston Church. — Winthrop impugned; his Vindication. — Proceedings in the Roxbury Church. — New Heresies.*

THE trial of Mrs. Hutchinson before the Court of Massachusetts, meeting at Cambridge in November, 1637, will be allowed by most readers to have been one of the most shameful proceedings recorded in the annals of Protestantism. In what respect it differed, save in the lightness of its penalty, from the trials instituted by the Inquisition, it would be very difficult to say. If the judgment of posterity, concerning her character and course, were to depend solely upon the report of her case when before her judges, she would stand clear of all imputations as well for the matter as for the manner of her heresy. One may well hesitate whether he should describe the process against her as a civil, a judicial, or an

ecclesiastical process. It is evident, that all the personalities with which she may have been chargeable, in the expression of her views, were more than returned upon her in the revenge of the wounded pride of her principal opponents.

With all the allowances which charity can devise, from the prevailing spirit of the times, from the generally allowed principle of mutual responsibility for opinions, from the private jealousies which had been aroused, from the apprehension of the licentious and revolutionary outrages that had attended in Germany the expression of opinions kindred, as was believed, to those of Mrs. Hutchinson; with full allowances for all these reasonable suggestions, the treatment of Mrs. Hutchinson on her trial deserves the severest epithets of censure. The united civil wisdom and Christian piety of the fathers of Massachusetts make but a sorry figure, as represented in a picture of the same offered by history to the imagination. Whatever may be said in palliation of the rigid measures of the Court against the men, who sided with Mrs. Hutchinson, against Greensmith, against the signers and the approvers of the remonstrance, against the Boston representatives, and against the idol, Wheelwright, the Court had done enough for security and enough for vengeance.

But here was now a woman in the case, and

the opposition to her rested entirely on a dislike of her opinions. The Court doubtless, under other circumstances, would have left all further proceedings to the church of which she was a member, and would have stopped short of its extreme inflictions upon those, who had received sentence before her, committing them also to the dealing of the church. But the church itself had gone astray; its judgment was already pronounced loudly and heartily in support of all the obnoxious parties. The church was likewise to be censured through the penalties inflicted upon its members. The matter in hand now was in fact no other, than to employ the combined authority of the towns around Boston, with their ministers, against the heretical and seditious church of the metropolis. The last scene in the long protracted strife was to be enacted, and the whole country was on tiptoe to watch its development, and to approve or condemn the result. The oracle of the new party was at the bar.

All the magistrates, or assistants, the upper house, representing the judicial and executive authority of the government, took part in the trial. Governor Winthrop was called by his office to perform the principal work in the prosecution, to which his feelings and convictions likewise would lead him. He thoroughly un-

derstood the whole ground of the controversy. His was no blind or passionate opposition. From the very beginning of the strife he had foreseen its tendency, and had then employed the means which a high-minded and a Christian man might use to check its progress. He was a perfect master of the Scriptures, and well read in the polemical divinity of his time. Nor does he appear to have been actuated in the least degree by the personal grievances and slights, of which he could not but have been sensible that he had suffered a large share. An expression of regard, which was afterwards made to him by the church, when calmness and union were restored, is a significant testimony that when the alienation was at its height, he led the powerless opposition of four members with a dignified and honest front. He was considerate of the rights of his teacher, Mr. Cotton, but gave even him to understand that he was no keeper of the consciences of his hearers. We are bound, therefore, to regard the course pursued by Winthrop as strictly conscientious. He had at stake his whole estate, his dearest convictions, his high-wrought hopes for the wilderness colony. He thought that the truth of God and Christ, the interests of a sound theology and a pure morality, of peace among brethren, and of safety to the Commonwealth, depended upon the

great issue now to be decided. The sense of his official responsibility, as a "nursing-father" of the colony, was deep and pure.

Deputy-Governor Dudley was a man of a more rigid temper, and of a less considerate piety, than Winthrop. He had not that interest in technical theology which the Governor possessed, and saw not so well the bearings of the controversy. There was no hearty concord between the two officials in any other matter of public concern; but in their views of Mrs. Hutchinson's course they agreed. Dudley, as already stated, had endeavored to delay her admission to the church, on account of the suspicions of her views, which had been imparted to him, and, with his wonted sternness, he did what he probably supposed he ought to do on her trial.

Endicott, Bradstreet, Harlakenden, Stoughton, and Nowell, used their influence against Mrs. Hutchinson. They put questions to her, pronounced censures upon her, and expatiated upon the dissension and mischief, which had attended her during her residence in Boston.

William Coddington alone, of the magistrates, sustained the defendant. He was a man of great influence, which he deserved by true worth. His occasional expressions looked all along to a wise indulgence and charity; at the end he plainly



and cogently avowed his dissent from the condemnation of Mrs. Hutchinson, and questioned the policy and justice of the proceedings. He did not attempt to shelter her from all blame of indiscretion or error. He was her friend, but not one of her worshippers; and though, greatly to his own present detriment, he espoused her cause, and followed her into banishment, he doubtless understood her weaknesses.

While the magistrates, with but one exception, gave no favor to the defendant, the deputies or representatives afforded but two or three to offer her any countenance, and they were at once silenced.

The ministers then in Massachusetts were probably all present at the Court, with the exception of perhaps two or three in the more distant settlements. The ministers were indeed the informers and the witnesses against Mrs. Hutchinson; it was by their evidence that ground of conviction was to be obtained. Cotton and Wilson of Boston, Symmes of Charlestown, Eliot and Welde of Roxbury, Shepherd of Cambridge, Peters of Salem, and Phillips of Watertown, with some of the ruling elders of the churches, are mentioned. Deacon Coggeshall and Elder Leverett, of Boston, endeavored to befriend the defendant. Mr. Cotton once or twice interposed in her favor, and, when questioned, made cer-

tain distinctions in her behalf, which relieved the charges against her. Mr. Shepherd spoke some pacificatory words.

The other ministers, smarting under the direct or indirect reproaches which Mrs. Hutchinson was generally understood to have spoken against them, were determined to insure her humiliation. They felt that their honor, their influence, and their claims to piety were at hazard. The controversy she had raised had indeed offered its most goading annoyances to them. They felt that they had given all possible assurance of devotion to Christ, and to the religious welfare of their several flocks. They were set as teachers over those who, like themselves, had left pleasant homes under the impulse of a self-denying faith, and now their ministry had fallen into disesteem, and they themselves were sensibly depreciated in the regard and reverence of those, who once professed to owe them the sincerest gratitude. The prime mover of the waters of bitterness was now before them, to be publicly proceeded against; and her judges were men.

Mr. Peters, Mr. Welde, and Mr. Symmes, urged the charges against the accused with the most directness, and these three had felt especially aggrieved at her general censure of those who preached a covenant of works. Set upon

as she was continually, whenever a private or public opportunity had been offered her, she undoubtedly had used words which she had forgotten, and for which she ought not to have been called into account. It would have been strange if she had not given offence to one or another of the brethren, who were frequently in disputation with her. Some of these private interviews were remembered and put to use.

The Court sat with open doors, and the whole case was watched with the most intense anxiety through the two days which were spent upon it. Such was the tribunal before which a female of undoubted piety, and of high excellence of character, was held to account for maintaining certain theological opinions distasteful to those, to whom she was in no wise accountable for her belief. She was even kept for a time in a standing posture, until her evident bodily infirmity obtained for her the privilege of sitting. The examination must have been extremely wearisome, and even Mr. Dudley complained that they would all be sick from fasting.

The proceedings began with a somewhat extended colloquy between Governor Winthrop and Mrs. Hutchinson, in which she sustained herself with great dignity, and met, with strong good sense in reply, the charges which were

laid at her door. Her husband does not appear in the proceedings, though he might have been present, unless he was one of those already mentioned as being absent on an exploring search for a place of refuge in case of necessity.

The Governor opened the disagreeable business, by addressing Mrs. Hutchinson as a disturber of the peace of the Commonwealth and of the churches; and then, without specifying any single offence, of such a nature and so substantiated as to subject her to a civil penalty, he heaped upon her an accumulation of censures. He said she was known to have had a principal share in promoting and divulging the opinions, which had caused so much trouble; that she was nearly connected by affinity and sympathy with those already censured; that she had defamed the churches and ministers of the jurisdiction; that she had maintained a meeting and an assembly at her house, which was neither tolerable nor comely in the sight of God, nor fitting for her sex; and that, though the Synod had denounced such meetings, she still persisted in holding them. On the strength of these charges, the Governor stated that the Court had sent for her to inquire into her case, that she might either be turned into the right way and made a profitable member, or if she should

prove obstinate in her course, that she might be restrained from causing any further trouble. She was then asked whether she assented to the factious and heretical practices and opinions already proceeded against, and whether she did not justify Mr. Wheelwright's sermon and the remonstrance.

Mrs. Hutchinson replied, that, though she was called to answer, no distinct charges were brought against her. The Governor said he had brought many. She desired that some one fault in speech or in deed might be specified, and when the Governor fixed upon her having countenanced factious persons, she said that it was matter of conscience for her to entertain saints. The Governor alleged that her sympathy with the signers of the petition was a breach of the fifth commandment, which required that honor should be given to parents, and magistrates were parents. Mrs. Hutchinson defended herself by suggesting, that parents and magistrates were to be honored conditionally, that is, "in the Lord," and that, if she feared the Lord and her parents, she might entertain others who feared the Lord, though, her parents should forbid her. Winthrop said he did not wish to discourse with one of her sex, and so he recurred to the general grievance, that she had advanced the fac-

tion, and dishonored the government. This she peremptorily denied.

The Governor then shifted the charge to the meetings which she had kept at her house. She replied, that this practice was as lawful to her as any of their practices were to them, and that the reason for her adopting it was, that, on her coming to the country, she was censured as proud by a friend, who observed that she did not attend the meetings of like character then established. It was answered, that the previous meetings were not offensive, and were not composed exclusively of women; but that hers were of another sort, and that she sometimes had had men present. The last statement she positively denied, and urged that she found a clear rule for her meetings in the injunction of Paul to Titus, "that the elder women should instruct the younger." The Governor rejoined, that the rule might apply to more private teaching, and the accused met his plea by asking, what authority she had for rejecting any one who should come to her for religious counsel. Mr. Endicott here put in a word, that the custom which she found existing in Boston was not enough to justify her. She still clung to the rule of Paul to Titus. The Governor said that no one rule must cross another, and that this, as she inter-

preted it, did cross another Scripture rule, from the union of which she would be justified only in instructing the younger women about their business, and to love their husbands, instead of making them clash. She insisted that the rule would cover public occasions.

It soon appeared, in answer to a question from the Deputy-Governor, that there were two meetings at Mrs. Hutchinson's house, one composed exclusively of women, and the other of men and women, though at the latter, "the teaching was always done by the men." The meetings were not uninterrupted in their succession, but, on occasions were deferred.

The Governor summed up the grievances from this charge, by saying, that her course in these meetings was greatly prejudicial to the peace of the state; that her opinions were contrary to the word of God, and had seduced many simple persons who resorted to her; that the late disturbances in the Commonwealth and the churches had been caused entirely by her followers; that it was not right that families should be neglected for so many meetings, and that no individual might set up an assembly in addition to those already established. She replied, that they had authority to put down her meetings, and that she would freely yield to authority as far as she herself was concerned, but



that she did not yet see light to deny the privilege to others.

This matter of the meetings being disposed of, the trial of Mrs. Hutchinson turned upon two points, the first being her alleged abuse of the ministers, and the second, her "revelations." It was by the latter that she was condemned; and she herself introduced the subject, though the Court would have been led to it, if she had not.

Deputy-Governor Dudley opened the main topic of discord. He said that, about three years before, there was peace, and that Mrs. Hutchinson had broken it; that, on her landing, he had received such information concerning her, as led him, through the pastor and teacher of the church, to institute an inquiry into her opinions, with the result of which he was at the time satisfied; that, within six months she had "vented her opinions," and made parties in the country; and that, claiming some of great influence on her side, she had said that all the ministers, save Mr. Cotton, preached nothing but a covenant of works.

The point thus raised was evidently the sorest and most tender which the whole controversy covered. It appeared, that at the conference which the ministers, at an early stage of the troubles, had sought with Mr. Cotton at his house,

Mrs. Hutchinson was called in. She thought herself among friends, holding private and free discourse under the protection of a general desire for kind and candid utterance. By her statement of what she clearly remembered, on the trial, we gather, that she was questioned at that conference as to the alleged difference which she had discovered between the preaching of Mr. Cotton and the preaching of the other ministers. She said that she was at first reserved and silent; but as Mr. Peters kindly urged openness and hearty sincerity, she bethought herself that she ought not to be influenced by the fear of man, and she uttered herself freely. She insisted, before the Court, that her expressions in the friendly conference were to this effect, that the ministers did not preach a covenant of grace so clearly, so distinctly, so positively, as did Mr. Cotton, and that they preached a covenant of works, something like the method and views of the apostles, before they had received, at the feast of Pentecost, a more complete knowledge of the spiritual mysteries of the Christian religion.

All the wounded and irritated feelings of the ministers were brought to bear upon their testimony, that Mrs. Hutchinson had spoken more and differently at the conference. She urged the supposed privacy and friendliness of the inter-

view; she complained that the informers were the witnesses; she required that they should be put under oath, and said that her statement would be sustained by a reference to the notes of the conversation, which had been taken by Mr. Wilson. The evidence of six of the ministers went to show, that she had said freely before them all more than she now allowed, and Mr. Wilson stated that his notes were very incomplete. They affirmed, three of them being put under oath, that she had said that the other ministers were not able ministers of the New Testament, because they were not sealed, and that they were under, not merely that they preached, a covenant of works. Mr. Symmes alleged how he had been troubled by her on the passage. Mr. Phillips, of Watertown, said she had included him under her condemnation, though she had never heard him. Mr. Shepherd, of Cambridge, said she told him, after listening to his lecture, that he "was not sealed," but he was willing to regard her error as a slip of the tongue.

There was much discussion in the Court about putting the ministers under oath, but the defendant insisted strenuously upon it, as she pertinently corrected them concerning a quotation from Scripture which they said she had used, and considered that her memory was as good as all theirs

combined. The oath was allowed, on the ground that it would better satisfy the country at large. Doubtless both parties were fully persuaded of the truth of their several representations, for it was a matter concerning which there might easily be a mistake. Mrs. Hutchinson acknowledged that in "an hour's discourse at the window," with Mr. Welde, she might have said that the other ministers were not "able ministers of the New Testament," probably using the phrase as a Scripture quotation, implying that "thorough-furnishing" for the work of the ministry which any one, in her opinion, might lack, who was deficient in some spiritual assurance. Mr. Cotton, on being called upon to testify as to what he remembered of the interview, took a place by the side of Mrs. Hutchinson, and reluctantly complied. He said he was saddened and sorry to hear her assent, at the interview, to the charge brought against her by his brethren, as having recognized a difference in their preaching, and that, when she was pressed to state what that difference was, she made it a gradual difference, one of degrees, in that the other ministers did not preach free grace so clearly as did he, and likened the ministers to the apostles before their inspiration. Mr. Cotton came into a collision with the ministers, and it is evident that there was much smothered feeling. Mr. Coddington affirmed,

that, even if she said all that was attributed to her, no harm was done; and he implied that the ministers ought to have felt complimented in being compared to the apostles.

From such a conflict and discord of statements upon a point where there ought to have been positive assurance, considering how much it was relied upon, it was impossible that any just decision could have been attained. Perhaps, therefore, it was well that new matter of objection was now introduced.

Mrs. Hutchinson, voluntarily and of her own prompting, entered upon the dangerous ground of "revelations." This was hailed by some of the more zealous spirits of the Court almost as a special providence, signifying her guilt, and tending to her conviction. Though she burst into no ecstasies of inspiration, and poured forth no glowing maledictions prophetic of divine vengeance, though she was even exceedingly moderate and calm in expressing a few great sentiments, which she felt prompted to represent as immediate disclosures of the Spirit, yet it was enough for the Court that she declared herself as thus miraculously prompted. At that time, the only alarming feature of enthusiasm was its pretence to spiritual illumination beyond or independent of the Scriptures, and the slightest encroachment upon that bewildering realm was thought as far more likely

to be a step towards Satan than a step towards God. This dread of immediate revelations was perfectly consistent with the prevailing method of applying texts of Scripture with forced and unwarrantable particularity to any case, which would admit of a remote resemblance. Within the limits of Scripture, the field of contention was fair for all parties ; but an attempt to break the bounds, and soar into the regions of especial and exclusive illumination, was to forsake the lists.

The Court had met with a perplexing difficulty in attempting to verify the alleged contempt expressed by Mrs. Hutchinson for the ministers. Only when Mr. Stoughton said he could not unite in censuring her, unless an oath was imposed upon the witnesses, was that ceremony performed ; and even then the calm denial by Mr. Cotton of the more obnoxious part of the language attributed to her, would have made her conviction, on that score alone, doubtful. The Court would have at once charged upon her a pretence to revelations, as common report ascribed them to her, if direct proof had been easy. Her own free reference to them was very opportune for the purpose of her judges.

She spoke of her alienation from the ministry of the Established Church in England, and

of the suggestion to her mind of certain texts of Scripture, which proved its ministers to be antichrist. Being asked how she knew that it was the Spirit which addressed her, she replied, that she knew it by an immediate revelation. Other passages, miraculously impressed upon her mind, led her to follow her only acceptable teachers, Cotton and Wheelwright, to New England, and assured her that she would be delivered now from all danger and risk by the interposition of the Almighty, as was Daniel in the lions' den. The glowing style of her language, and the boldness of her address at this moment, led one of the ministers to suggest, that she was rather an antitype of the lions than of Daniel. She concluded by warning the Court against wronging her, or putting away the Lord Jesus from them, as they would dread bringing a curse upon themselves.

Mr. Bartholemew, a deputy from Salem, here referred to some other revelations of Mrs. Hutchinson, as he had known her in England, and crossed the ocean in her company. She had said to him, as the vessel came within sight of Boston, that her heart would have failed within her, if she had not a sure word that England would be destroyed. She had likewise told him, that no great thing had happened to her which had not been revealed to her beforehand. In



the same conversation, she made a reference to Mr. Hooker, "whose spirit she liked not," though she expressed her pleasure at a sentence in a sermon which he had delivered in the Low Countries, in which he said that it had been revealed to him the day before that England should be destroyed.\* Mr. Symmes added an instance of her revelations. Mr. Cotton was appealed to on this matter of revelations, which he in reply distinguished into two kinds, the one being beside the scripture, or independent of it, which were dangerous and fantastical, and the other being of a scriptural sort, and never dispensed save in or according to the word of God. This latter sort, which would now be called deep impressions, or mysterious promptings, caused by concentrated and earnest meditation upon some passage of the Bible, Mr. Cotton heartily approved; and doubtless it was only to such as these that Mrs. Hutchinson made pretension. Mr. Cotton, on this, as on the other

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\* Mr. Eliot took upon himself to question whether Mr. Hooker had ever said this, as it "was against his mind and judgment." But it is true that Mr. Hooker did say what Mrs. Hutchinson attributed to him, and even more literally and strongly too. It was in his farewell sermon on leaving England; and some years afterwards, when the civil war looked towards a fulfilment of it, he endorsed the same prediction, by referring to it in a sermon at Hartford. Mather's *Magnalia*, Vol. II. p. 310.

point, which was debated in the trial, gave but meagre satisfaction to the other ministers.

As to the delivery which Mrs. Hutchinson said would save her from calamity, she would not explain whether she believed it was to be by the common providence of God, or by miracle. Mr. Cotton left the matter of her expectations in doubt, when his opinion was asked on this, as on the other questions. The sad fate, which in a few years closed the sufferings of the accused, was thought by her enemies to be but a melancholy commentary upon her prediction, interpreted in either way.

It was upon these, to say the least, incomplete, undefined, and unsubstantiated charges only, that Mrs. Hutchinson could be convicted at all. Mr. Coddington alone raised a word of direct and bold opposition, alleging in her support the various explanations and palliations, which would suggest themselves to any cool observer, to relieve the real blame which might attach to Mrs. Hutchinson. The intention of the Court was probably fixed before her examination. Governor Winthrop therefore put the question, whether it was the mind of the Court that, for "the troublesomeness of her spirit, and the danger of her course," she should be banished, and imprisoned until she could be sent away. All but three held up the hand. Of

these three, Mr. Jennison, deputy from Ipswich, said he could not vote either way, and would give his reasons if desired. Mr. Coddington, the magistrate, and Mr. Colburn, deputy of Boston, alone put up the hand in opposition.

The sentence, as pronounced in the Court, stands upon the records of Massachusetts as follows ;

“Mrs. Hutchinson, the wife of Mr. William Hutchinson, being convicted for traducing the ministers and their ministry in the country, she declared voluntarily her revelations, and that she should be delivered, and the Court ruined with their posterity, and thereupon was banished, and in the mean while was committed to Mr. Joseph Welde (of Roxbury) until the Court shall dispose of her.” \*

The guardian to whose care she was thus temporarily committed, that her banishment might not be in the winter, was a deputy of Roxbury, and a brother of the minister. She was to be treated with kindness at his house, at the ex-

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\* Massachusetts Court Records, Vol. I. p. 203. There are two accounts of this trial preserved; one, copied from an old manuscript, is in the Appendix to Hutchinson's *History of Massachusetts*, Vol. II.; the other is given in Mr. Welde's tract. The former is more full, and is apparently impartial, though some passages were obliterated by time, before the document was printed.

pense of her husband; but only her particular friends and the elders were to be admitted to her, lest the eloquence of persecution should double the power and the mischief of her gifts.

The Court, being determined to make thorough work in this vexatious matter, called before them all who had put their names to the remonstrance, or were ready to approve it. Of these, Captain Underhill, relying upon his military merits, stood stoutly to his signature; and, being asked for a Scripture warrant for such contempt of magistrates, he first took refuge under the rough speech of Joab to King David, and then alleged the freedom always allowed to military officers, and of which he had taken the license with Count Nassau in the Low Countries. But his double plea would not save him from disfranchisement and the loss of office. As already hinted, he was amenable to some more cognizable charges than those of heresy and free speech. All who held public places, and who joined in the remonstrance, were deposed.

All the work of exorcism that was yet left undone, was completed by a summary measure, which will be best described in the words of the Court record.

“Whereas the opinions and revelations of Mr. Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson have seduced and led into dangerous errors many

of the people here in New England, insomuch as there is just cause of suspicion that they, as others in Germany in former times, may, upon some revelation, make some sudden irruption upon those that differ from them in judgment; for prevention whereof, it is ordered, that all those whose names are underwritten shall (upon warning given or left at their dwelling-houses) before the thirtieth day of this month of November, deliver in at Mr. Cane's [Keayne's] house, at Boston, all such guns, pistols, swords, powder, shot, and match, as they shall be owners of, or have in their custody, upon pain of ten pounds for every default to be made thereof;”\* a like penalty being enjoined if any of those thus disarmed should purchase any arms or ammunition. Then follow the names of those thus sentenced, including fifty-eight of Boston, five of Salem, three of Newbury, five of Roxbury, two of Ipswich, and two of Charlestown. Liberty was granted to any of the condemned to escape this penalty, by acknowledging “their sin, in subscribing this seditious libel, to two magistrates.”

This order was obeyed only with the greatest reluctance and discontent, which in some amounted almost to a purpose of resistance. It

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\* Court Records, Vol. I. p. 207.

added to their humiliation, that they were compelled to go of themselves and deliver up their arms. But resistance would have been vain, as Boston, where the disaffected were principally found, was under the ban of the jurisdiction. We are forced to believe, that either imagination or threats offered to the Court some reason to apprehend, that the tragedies of Munster might be repeated here. It is too much to suppose, that the suggestion was a mere pretence to cloak an arbitrary and cowardly measure, especially as the Court soon after ordered the powder and arms belonging to the country to be removed from Boston to Roxbury and Cambridge. Undoubtedly, some sudden outrage was feared, as the violent action of high-wrought enthusiasm inspired by prophecy and revelation. Mr. Welde, in evident sincerity, says, that hints of this kind were dropped, and beside, that some intimations of what was to occur, and some delirious predictions, were so boldly and freely spoken, that Mr. Cotton made them the subject of several warning sermons.\*

Ten of the censured party recanted immediately on the promulgation of the order of the Court, and others did the same, who were not on the list. They were at once pardoned.

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\* Welde's *Short Story*, &c. p. 42.

The majority of those thus dealt by, in process of time, were conciliated; but some of them were alienated once for all from Massachusetts. These left the jurisdiction, as we shall soon see. The spirit of opposition, and the sense of wrong, being once kindled in their breast, remained in them for life. Their opinions departed further and further from those established in Massachusetts, and a few returned to Boston in the character of Quakers, on visits of annoyance. Mrs. Dyer, who was sadly signalized in the controversy with Mrs. Hutchinson, being, after repeated banishment as a Quaker, condemned to death, was hanged as such on Boston Common.

The Court felt the importance of forestalling public opinion in England in reference to their proceedings, that they might not suffer by slanderous reports, and that their "godly friends" might not be discouraged from coming over. Accordingly, an account of the whole controversy was sent into England, which was printed there, and introduced with a preface by Mr. Welde, of Roxbury, while he was in England, in 1644.\* Doubtless he was the writer of the whole con-

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\* "A Short Story of the Rise, Reign, and Ruin, of the Antinomians, Familists, and Liberalists, that infected the Churches of New England," &c.



tents. This tract created much sensation abroad, and is referred to in many of the pamphlets of the time.

The weight of indignation of the members of the Boston church fell upon Governor Winthrop, as at least the civil leader in the severe prosecution against them. A vigorous effort was made to call him to account, but the elders would not encourage the measure. The Governor, being aware of the feeling and the intention, took occasion to speak at large upon the matter before the whole congregation, when he said that, if his course had been publicly questioned, he should have fully justified himself by proving the absolute irresponsibility of the Court, for its proceedings, to the church.\* He also addressed a letter, dated January 15th, 1637-8, to his "Worthy Friends and Beloved Brethren, Mr. Coddington, Mr. Coggeshall, and Mr. Colburn," censuring them for their "rash, unwarranted, and seditious delinquency," in signing the remonstrance against the proceedings of the Court.† An order was likewise passed in the Court against any one, especially a magistrate, who should be guilty of contempt; yet an attempt

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. pp. 249, 250.

† This document is in the Appendix to Savage's *Winthrop*, Vol. I. p. 403.

is made to distinguish the right of petition, as it is acknowledged that "the best judges may err through ignorance or misinformation." \*

Among the lamentable results of the controversy, at this stage of it, was the development of various wild and free notions, which are probably to be in justice ascribed as much to the manner in which heresy had been treated, as to the heresy itself. The church at Roxbury began to deal with the offenders in its own communion. Those who had signed the petition were called to account, and were examined at great length. Winthrop and Welde assert, that this examination "discovered," we might say *created*, or *called into being*, "divers other foul errors" and "corrupt opinions." Admonition was at first attempted in the Roxbury church; but, as this was found insufficient, five or six members were excommunicated, and some of these, says Winthrop, were taken "in plain lies and other foul distempers." † The reference doubtless is to the "inferences" of a most objectionable character, which were drawn from offensive opinions, though not professed or allowed by the accused.

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\* Court Records, Vol. I., under date.

† Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 250. Welde, p. 43.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Interviews of the Elders with Mrs. Hutchinson. — Another List of Heresies. — The Elders prompt the Boston Church to proceed against her. — Her two Examinations after Thursday Lecture. — Her Answers. — Appearance of Harmony. — Her Admonition. — Is charged with Deception, and on that Charge is excommunicated. — Alienation of some of her Friends. — Absence of some of her chief Supporters. — Preparations for a Removal to Rhode Island.*

THERE was yet another ordeal, through which Mrs. Hutchinson was to pass, more legitimate, if not more merciful, in its dealings. The church, to which she had voluntarily united herself, had, by its covenant, a relation of responsibility to her, and she had the same to the church, in matters of faith and discipline. She was now for the first time to be called to account by this body as a diseased member. But even this measure did not originate in that church, nor would it, probably, have been adopted there, if the church had been left unadvised to its own motions. The magistrates and ministers could have been induced by no earthly motive to allow the obnoxious doctrines of the new par-

ty to pass without further interference. Conferences and consultations were held in uninterrupted succession, for the sake of devising some "way to help the growing evils."

While Mrs. Hutchinson was restrained at Roxbury, her spirits fell in natural melancholy; but she was more of an oracle then than ever before. The elders, particularly, beset her with their examinations. They went to her with the story of some strange or foolish notion, which had been ascribed to one or another of her friends. They pressed her, too, with their own inferences, saying, that if she held this, she must therefore hold that. In this way, the elders discovered that she held "gross errors, to the number of thirty or thereabouts." In a conference in Boston, the other ministers acquainted the Boston church with these errors, offering to prove the liability and the guilt of Mrs. Hutchinson in them, if she would appear in the open congregation. The elders of Boston assented to the motion, though they declined appearing as witnesses. Permission being granted by the magistrates, she came for this purpose to her own house in Boston.

Thursday, March 15th, 1638, the lecture was set an hour earlier than usual, that full time might be allowed for the solemn work of endeavoring to exhaust what little spirit, bad or good, might be left in this dreaded heretic. Less

than half of the interesting materials then offered would have sufficed to make a holiday for old and young ; but the whole of them, combined and united, must have spread an intense and universal excitement. The Court being then in session at Cambridge, the Governor and Treasurer were allowed to go to Boston as members of the church. Mrs. Hutchinson did not come in until after the usual services were finished ; an act of implied contempt, which did not fail to be noted, though she excused herself by alleging bodily infirmity.

The new specifications of heresy charged upon Mrs. Hutchinson were, for the most part, harmless speculations, wholly metaphysical, or at least without any dangerous practical tendency ; and, more than all, they were expressions of opinions which she never would have obtruded, nor probably have uttered, of her own accord. The elders had digested from her conversations with them twenty-nine heretical opinions. A copy of them, subscribed with the names of witnesses, had been sent to her some days before the examination ; and when the list was read before the congregation she acknowledged them, though she complained, as in the Court, that private conversations were put to such a use, and vehemently rebuked her pastor, Mr. Wilson, for following her sentence of banishment with reproach-

es. Mrs. Hutchinson also alleged that she held none of the errors now ascribed to her before her restraint at Roxbury.

Formidable as is the list of the "errors," it contains no matter new in the whole controversy, except that she was charged with the doctrine of the Materialists; and this was the chief matter of debate. She held to the opinion, "that the souls of men are mortal by generation, but are afterwards made immortal by Christ's purchase." She was, however, induced to acknowledge, after a wearisome discussion, that the opinion was confuted. The examination then passed to another of her "erroneous opinions," "that there was no resurrection of these bodies, but that those who were united to Christ would have new bodies." This opinion, which has been and is held by Christians as wise and as holy as any of her judges, she positively refused to renounce. She listened patiently to all that was said against it, and met every objection with a most masterly and pertinent reply. In this she fairly triumphed; and as argument failed to convince, and authority could not subdue her, the elders of Boston propounded to the church that she should be solemnly admonished. All the church consented except two members; these two were sons of Mrs. Hutchinson; and because they would not join in censuring a pa-

rent whom they revered, they were first admonished, being most pitifully and pathetically addressed as giving way to natural affection, and as "tearing the very bowels of their souls, by hardening their mother in sin."\*

Mr. Cotton, who pronounced the admonition on the sons, pronounced it also upon the mother. He spoke to her of the high esteem in which she was at first held, and of the good service she had then rendered, but added that, by her recent course and heresies, she had done more of harm. "He laid her sin to her conscience with much zeal and solemnity; he admonished her also of the height of her spirit; then he spake to the sisters of the church, and advised them to take heed of her opinions, and to withhold all countenance and respect from her, lest they should harden her in her sin." These outrageous proceedings were continued till eight o'clock at night, when the victim was told to prepare for another like trial on the next "lecture-day."

The Court had ordered that Mrs. Hutchinson should return to Roxbury again; "but, upon intimation that her spirit began to fall," and with the hope that she might be subdued, she was

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\* Welde's *Short Story*, &c. p. 62. Cotton (Answer to Baylie) says that only one son dissented, and received admonition. Welde says two.



allowed to remain, during the ensuing week, at the house of Mr. Cotton, where Mr. Davenport, of New Haven, was then visiting. The two ministers used all their influence to soften and to change her views.

At her second examination, which took place after the lecture, March 22d, Mrs. Hutchinson, in true humility of spirit for whatever unintentional errors she might have held or committed, yet with a dignified profession of her liberty to keep her own convictions, again stood before the whole congregation. The efforts of the two ministers had had an effect upon her, so far as to bring her into a readiness to allow and confess all that truly Christian-minded and considerate judges could in reason have required. She delivered answers in writing to the opinions charged upon her, and acknowledged some error in all of them except that relating to the resurrection. Being permitted to address the congregation, she humbly acknowledged faults of temper, of speech, and of conduct; she thought that God might have left her to herself for the slights which she had put upon the ordinances, upon the ministers, and the magistrates; she owned that her speeches and revelations in the Court were rash and groundless; and she desired the prayers of the church in her behalf.

Thus far it seemed as if this formidable heretic was subdued, and would yet become the instrument of reclaiming all who had followed her in the way of dissension. But when her answers in writing were examined, they were found to be encumbered with explanations and circumlocutions, and were not satisfactory. She denied that she had ever held the opinion attributed to her, "that there is no inherent righteousness in the saints, and that the righteousness in them is all the righteousness of Christ;" and she ascribed the charge against her, on that account, as well she might, to the obscurity, or misunderstanding, or misrepresentation, of her expressions. Upon this arose an imputation of falsehood. She insisted that she had never held the offensive opinion. Others affirmed that she had notoriously expressed it. The elders and others directly accused her of lying, and she as pertinaciously maintained her innocence. For this Mrs. Hutchinson was condemned by the church. The controversy, of three years' continuance, which had drawn nearly the whole of the believers in Boston, magistrates, ministers, women, soldiers, and the common multitude, under the banners of a female leader, and had changed the government of the colony, and spread its strange reports over Protestant Europe, was thus brought

to an issue, by imputing deception about one of the most unintelligible tenets of faith to her, who could not be circumvented in any other way.

Some moved that the admonition against her should be repeated; but the church, by silence, gave general consent to her excommunication. Mr. Cotton shifted the disgraceful work upon the pastor, Mr. Wilson, on the plea that an untruth, being "matter of manners," came under his discipline. Mrs. Hutchinson offered no objection, nor asked for delay. The venerable records of the First Church in Boston are thus disfigured by the following entry; "The 22d of the 1st Month, [March,] 1638. Anne, the wife of our brother, William Hutchinson, having on the 15th of this month been openly, in the public congregation, admonished of sundry errors held by her, was on the same 22d day cast out of the church, for impenitently persisting in a manifest lie, then expressed by her in open congregation."\*

Thus it appears that Mrs. Hutchinson, in her

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\* Records of the First Church of Boston, p. 9. The account given in the text of the examinations of Mrs. Hutchinson before the church, is drawn from the statements of Welde and Winthrop. Candor, therefore, would lead us to believe, that there were some softening and redeeming particulars, which, if tending at all to the honor of the accused, would not have been recorded by these writers.

examination before the church, made all Christian amends for everything that had been amiss in her conduct in society, and in her language and behavior before the Court; and that she was excommunicated on the charge of deception, of falsehood. This charge rested wholly on the ground just stated. She offered a satisfactory explanation of some bold and literal statements of doctrinal belief, and followed the explanation with the direct assertion, that she had never maintained or taught anything different from her present professions. To have allowed the matter to be thus disposed of, would have approached so near to self-humiliation on the part of her most heated opponents, that any other course would have been preferable to them. To admit that all the excitement and passion, which had distracted the colony, had arisen from the indefiniteness of language, was a concession too large for the well known characteristics of human nature. It was far easier to charge a woman of unchallenged integrity and virtue with falsehood, provided that charge could be relieved or heightened, as might be, by the mystifications of a hair-splitting theology.

The result of this examination tends greatly to confirm a conviction, which arises at the first notice of the controversy, and which grows strong through its progress, that it was not so much

Mrs. Hutchinson's views, as the inferences which a jealous and timid party drew from them, that caused her to be so harshly dealt with. At the same time it should be allowed, that the more unwise and rash among her followers helped these inferences to become real and most offensive opinions, actually received, and freely expressed, often, too, in more offensive and unbecoming ways. It is equally disagreeable and unnecessary to believe, that Mrs. Hutchinson practised any deception.

She held literally and earnestly to the conviction, that a person who was in the way of salvation had an assurance within his breast, written or whispered there by the Spirit of God; and that all outside piety, whatever its means, recommendations, and value, was so infinitely below that inward assurance as to belong to another, even to a hostile, covenant. And this is but one of the many phases of the controversy concerning faith and works. Her fundamental opinion, on the leading tenet just stated, was what had been dear to Mrs. Hutchinson from the commencement of her religious experience. It was the light, which she believed had shined into her mind upon it, that gave her peace in England; and it was to cherish that light, that, she resigned herself to share the exile of the only two preachers in all England, who "spoke to

her condition." This tenet, all the original notices of her agree in declaring, she began to explain and enforce in sick chambers, and by their bearings upon it, she expounded at her meetings the sermons which favored or conflicted with it. It was this tenet which won for her the approval of Cotton, the admiration of young Vane, and the sterling regard of Codrington. This tenet she never yielded, nor did she evade any legitimate and rigid inferences from it. If she deceived her judges at all, it was in not allowing them to fasten upon her any caricatured likenesses or deductions from her opinions.

The question naturally presents itself, What had wrought so great a change in the Boston church, so that, from having only some half-dozen members to oppose her course in one year, the whole covenanted company should unite in visiting upon her the heaviest ecclesiastical censure in the year following? This question admits of a very satisfactory answer; for three principal causes, to omit a reference to others which might have operated, contributed to effect that change in a way perfectly consistent with the fair credit of Mrs. Hutchinson.

Whatever may have been the just grounds of alarm, offered by the heat and folly of individuals, to authorize the Court to disarm the

majority of the Boston church, on the plea that they might venture to repeat the tragedy of Munster, it is still apparent that the followers of Mrs. Hutchinson were remarkably patient and peaceable. They marked the steady course of opposition, and with it the increased exertion of the civil power to overwhelm the weaker party. To such a struggle there could be but one termination, and they preferred to anticipate, rather than to defer it. The comfort of their families, the relations of neighborhood, their civil privileges, their landed property and improvements, and, what was the crowning comfort of their lives, the delight of their temple services, were all at stake, and they were willing to sacrifice something to retain them. There were many in the Boston church, who weighed this balance of peace, and union, and prosperity, against a cherished friend and opinion; and though all, who thus allowed prudence to add the turning weight, would have resisted if anything could have been hoped from resistance, they were willing to acquiesce in silence in the ultimate action of the church; for it is not probable, that they joined in the vote of excommunication, even if they were present in the assembly.

Others may have been turned from their attachment to Mrs. Hutchinson by the very means



used to insure her condemnation. The inferences, which had been drawn from her opinions, might well shock some timid persons. The formidable list of heretical articles, authenticated by the signatures of elders, and thus forcing upon her, in a public defence, certain rash and hasty expressions used in private conversation, may have led some to discover in her views danger and folly. If the catalogue of unclaimed and unattributed errors, read over in the Synod, had so irritated her followers as to drive them from its attractive discussions, many of these same persons might have been appalled at discovering that she acknowledged any part of them. If these offensive inferences from her opinions could suggest themselves to some persons, others might be frightened by them. It is probable that in this way many of Mrs. Hutchinson's friends were alienated from her. They were inclined to admit that they had been entrapped into real heresy, were likely to be led on much beyond the limits of speculation, which they recognized as authoritative; and from mere dread of being committed to a reckless and faithless fellowship of errors, they did not inquire very carefully into the course, which had been pursued with Mrs. Hutchinson by the ministers after her condemnation by the Court. Doubtless many of the church were led by the heret-

ical articles nominally vouched by Mrs. Hutchinson, to allow, if not to encourage, her excommunication.

From the two causes just named, the worldly-prudent and timid of the Boston church might be led to condemn her whom they but lately approved; and these are all for whose supposed change of opinion we have to account. The more devoted and distinguished among the friends of Mrs. Hutchinson did not join in her sentence, nor sit to hear it pronounced, for they were not present when she was examined. Their absence, which thus enabled the church to act with their apparent sanction, even Winthrop does not hesitate to refer to, as a contingency designed by the providence of God.\*

Mr. John Clarke, one of the more eminent of the fifty-eight church members, who had been disarmed by the order of the Court, proposed to some of his censured brethren a removal from the jurisdiction, and had been seeking a place of refuge in the summer, before their last penalty was laid upon them. They intended to go to the southward; but, while their vessel was passing round Cape Cod, they crossed by land, with a view to sail afterwards to Long Island and Delaware Bay. At Providence, they met

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 258.

with Roger Williams, by whose recommendation, and the advice of some friends at Plymouth, they concluded to settle at Aquetneck, now Rhode Island. Having come to this determination, they went back to Boston, to make arrangements for their removal; and early in the spring, they made a permanent settlement at Pocasset, now Newport. The number of refugees increasing, another settlement was soon made at Portsmouth, the opposite extremity of the island. The civil compact, entered into by these twice exiled sufferers for conscience, was signed by eighteen persons, on the 7th of March, 1638, a fortnight before the excommunication of Mrs. Hutchinson.\* William Coddington and Edward Hutchinson, junior or senior, are the only two names subscribed to this compact, which are not on the list of the disarmed; and of the whole eighteen, at least twelve were members of the Boston church. Whether or not advantage was taken of their departure to visit upon Mrs. Hutchinson the ecclesiastical penalty, is doubtful; but it is certain that their absence insured her condemnation, though some of them occasionally visited Boston while completing their arrangements. We

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\* Callender's *Century Sermon*, Rhode Island Hist. Coll. Vol. IV. p. 84. The cession of the island to these associates was made by the Indians on the 24th of this same month.

find, indeed, upon the records of the Court, that, on the 12th of March, several of these offensive persons, with the names of Mr. Coddington and Deacon Coggeshall opening the list, were called to appear, if in the jurisdiction, to answer about their departing or remaining.\* Mr. Coddington did not remove his family to the island until April 26th.†

After sentence was pronounced in the church against Mrs. Hutchinson, her spirits, which had been sensibly depressed, and with good reason, considering her place and treatment, rallied again, and all her dignity, and probably all her assurance, came to her aid. She did not pour insult or defiance upon her judges; but she gloried in her experience, and said that, next to Christ, she was enjoying the highest happiness of her life. Mr. Welde put his own construction upon this triumphing of the "American Jezabel," by closing his "Story" in these words; "God giving her up, since the sentence of excommunication, to that hardness of heart, as she is not affected with any remorse, but glories in it, and fears not the vengeance of God which she lies under,

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\* Massachusetts Court Records, Vol. I., under date. The cause assigned in the Records is, that the Court had received an intimation that Coddington and others intended to go off only for a time, and then to return to Boston.

† Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 261.

as if God did work contrary to his own word, and loosed from heaven, while his church had bound upon earth.” \*

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## CHAPTER X.

*The Warrant of the Sentence of Banishment against Mrs. Hutchinson enforced. — She leaves Massachusetts for Rhode Island. — New Anxieties aroused by that Colony. — Condition of the Boston Church. — Mrs. Hutchinson writes a Letter of Admonition. — Charged with denying Magistracy. — A disorderly Church gathered by the Exiles. — Mrs. Hutchinson continues her Prophesyings. — A Deputation sent to her from the Church at Boston. — Their Report of their Mission, and Action upon it. — Francis Hutchinson's Letter. — Mr. Cotton's Reply. — Letter of the Church to Mrs. Hutchinson's Friends. — Debate upon it. — Reverend Mr. Collins and Francis Hutchinson imprisoned in Boston.*

Two or three days after the ecclesiastical censure against Mrs. Hutchinson, Governor Winthrop

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\* Welde's *Short Story*, p. 66.

required her to comply with the sentence, which had been previously pronounced against her in the Court, enjoining her to leave the jurisdiction by the end of March. Yielding to the authority of his warrant, she left Boston by water, on the 28th of the month, for Mount Wollaston, (Braintree,) where her husband, like many other Boston people, had a farm. Her intention was to accompany Mr. Wheelwright and his family to the new settlement, designed by him and some of his followers, at the Falls of the Piscataqua, to which he gave the name of Exeter. But her husband having already united with others in the purchase of Rhode Island, she changed her intention, and went by land to Providence, where she joined her friends for their new destination.

The terrors of the law were held over the heretics of Boston; and it being once decided that they must depart, it was concluded that the sooner the jurisdiction was rid of them, the more probable would be the hope of restoring peace among a distracted people. In the course of the following summer, large numbers of Boston and the neighborhood moved to the Island; and freedom of conscience allowed, perhaps it did something to create, a very great variety of opinion about religious institutions, ordinances, and doctrines.

It seemed, for a season, to be doubtful whether the summary measures taken against the Antinomians would effect anything more than merely to change the form, in which the annoyance of their influence would manifest itself. There was by no means a restoration of harmony in the church at Boston for many months. The relations of private life had been imbittered; and the manner in which opinions had been dealt by, as well as the opinions themselves, had introduced feuds which did not for a long time subside. There is no period of the colonial history, which, as far as regards the character, motives, and conduct, of individuals, requires more caution in the perusal of its records than this.

All sorts of wild and ruinous speculations and practices were attributed by Massachusetts writers to the early settlers of Rhode Island. Some of these charges may now be satisfactorily proved false, and others were doubtless exaggerated. Still it is but fair to allow, that the near proximity of a company of disaffected and heretical persons was a serious grievance to the people of the Bay colony. Rhode Island harbored and sheltered a class of enthusiasts and opinionists, whom they considered as dangerous as malefactors. It was also a place of safe refuge for all obnoxious heretics, from which they might travel



easily to Boston, and instil the supposed poison of their views, and then be off before the law, though it was remarkably vigilant in this respect, was able to seize them. Massachusetts felt that the vagaries of even one man or woman might endanger all her liberties, might render worthless the property which the adventurers had embarked in their enterprise, might bring upon them the threatening arm of the commission in England, and utterly annul the obligations and fellowship of their church covenant.

It was, therefore, with mingled indignation and alarm, that the authorities in Massachusetts watched the successful commencement of a new and heretical colony so near; a colony which expressly enfranchised all opinions in religion, and restricted the power of the magistracy to the very narrowest compass, even in civil matters. Massachusetts used considerable ingenuity in devising means for extending some sort of control over those of the Island, who had been banished from her jurisdiction, or had gone there in sympathy with them. Some of these had been excommunicated, some admonished, by the church at Boston, and others were still in communion with it, as they had not been censured, nor had voluntarily dissolved their own connection with it. Over all these alike the church, according to its covenant, was bound to keep watch and

care. Even the excommunicated members were still, in theory, subject to its discipline, were to be reclaimed, and were expected to put themselves in the way of being restored. It was by force of this plea, that Mrs. Hutchinson was regarded as, though a smoking and blazing brand, still a brand which ought, if possible, to be snatched from the burning.

Upon a Fast, which was observed in Massachusetts, December 13th, 1638, on account of prevailing sicknesses and heresies, "and the general declining of professors to the world," Mr. Cotton bewailed the state of things, and reviewed the whole controversy caused by Mrs. Hutchinson. He gave, doubtless, a perfectly true and candid statement of his part in it, and complained that his own name had been abused, and his opinions perverted, and himself made a cloak, by seducers and heretics. Doctrines bearing only a resemblance to those, which he had preached, had been taught, and then ascribed to him, for the sake of entrapping others, but denied by their authors to himself, when he had expostulated with them. He acknowledged the justice of the sentence of banishment against the leaders in the mischief, without naming them; but he recommended that those whom they had misled should be dealt with by the church, or imprisoned, or fined, instead of being banished, as

this extreme punishment would sever them from all religious privileges, and lead them into worse heresies. The teacher doubtless suggested, at the same time, some church proceedings in reference to those at the Island.\*

Soon after this, Mrs. Hutchinson, probably considering that if she still had any relation to the Boston church, the relation was a reciprocal one, addressed to it a letter of admonition. The elders would not give it a public reading, because the writer was under excommunication.† She continued to exercise her gifts in teaching and exhortation, and certainly her own hard experience, and the course which had been pursued at Boston, afforded her many new, and rich, and forcible illustrations of the difference between the "covenant of grace" and the "covenant of works."

The report soon came to Massachusetts, that many at the Island, especially those under the influence of Mrs. Hutchinson's new teachings, were averse to any magistracy, and denied its necessity and legitimacy. This charge has been recently thought to be slanderous. Winthrop says that, in a popular tumult, Mr. Coddington, Judge or Governor of the Island colony, and

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 280.

† Ibid. p. 293.

the other three magistrates, were put out, and only Mr. William Hutchinson, the husband of the heretic, was raised to civil office. He was indeed a magistrate in 1640, and probably would have been again, had not his life closed in 1642; but he was not alone in office, as there was at the same time, as well as before and afterwards, a Governor, and deputy, and three other magistrates.\*

The next information concerning the heretics at the Island was, that they had "gathered a church in a disordered way," consisting of excommunicated and admonished members of the Boston and Roxbury churches, of members still attached to these churches, who had neither been censured nor formally dismissed, and of some new professors. This was a terrible scan-

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\* Letter of Chief Justice Eddy in a note to Savage's *Winthrop*, Vol. I. p. 296. It would seem, however, as if there was some ground for the charge of dislike to magistracy imputed to Mrs. Hutchinson. The following evidence appears direct. It is given by Baylie, in his "Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time," p. 150, on the authority of Roger Williams, when visiting England. "Mr. Williams related to me that Mistress Hutchinson, (with whom he was familiarly acquainted, and of whom he spake much good,) after she had come to Rhode Island, and her husband had been made Governor [magistrate] there, she persuaded him to lay down his office upon the opinion, which newly she had taken up of the unlawfulness of magistracy."

dal to all, whose religious faith loved to manifest itself within the decent restraints of order. Those whom the Boston church might still hope to influence were at once called in question for partaking in such a sin. A few, who came under the censure, were wont frequently to visit Boston on their own or on others' business, and they were dealt with as often as opportunity offered. Thus the discord still continued, the controversy was still kept open; and merely by force of performing such acts of discipline so often, the great majority became gradually weaned from attachment to Mrs. Hutchinson. Mr. Coddington, the leader of the new colony, being on a visit to Boston, was, like the rest, brought under the discipline of the church, and because he only acknowledged a measure of fault, and would not admit the whole sin charged upon him, he was solemnly admonished.

Popular regard, at least as far as the more superstitious and timid among the people were interested, was in a great measure turned from Mrs. Hutchinson by a misfortune which befell her as a mother, and which was exaggerated into a horrible and loathsome tale. Even Winthrop gives at length all the particulars in which a deformity of nature, with all its sickening minutiae, is construed into a fearful warning from a special providence. It became one, of his mag-

nanimity and excellent wisdom, to have reflected whether the vexations and journeys to which Mrs. Hutchinson had been subjected, her "fears and tossings to and fro," were not the more natural cause of her subjection to a not unusual visitation. Mrs. Dyer, one of her devoted followers, afterwards hanged in Boston as a Quaker, was a subject of the same distressing fruit of travail. Both these cases were not only thoroughly examined by physicians and magistrates, but were even discoursed upon from pulpits, and made public over Christendom.

The church in Boston concluded upon sending a deputation of its members to the Island, to make one more attempt to reclaim Mrs. Hutchinson and her followers. Mr. Welde says, that "four men of a lovely and winning spirit" were sent on this errand; but by the record it appears there were but three, namely, Captain Edward Gibbons, Mr. William Hibbins, and Mr. John Oliver. An account of their mission is extant in manuscript. As this has never been made public, and as our histories contain no similar details of acts of church discipline, it is here given entire. The return was made in the meeting-house, after Mr. Cotton had finished his usual public exposition, March 16th, 1640.\*

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\* For the extracts which follow, relating to the proceedings in the church at Boston, I am indebted to a thick

“PASTOR. Those three brethren that were sent by the church to those wandering sheep at the Island being now returned, accordinge to the custom of the churches and servants of God in the Scripture, when they did returne, they gave an account to the church of God’s dealinge with them, the passages of his providences, and how God carried them alonge; it is expected of the church that some one of you, or all of you one after another, should declare the same, that the church may have matter to praise God with you.

“BROTHER HIBBINS. We think it our duty to give an account to the church of God’s dealinge with us in our journey out and in, and of the success of our business when we came to our journey’s end, at the Island. The

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quarto MS., belonging to the Massachusetts Historical Society, and which, to an antiquarian, is of great value. It contains the laborious penmanship of Captain Robert Keyne, a famous merchant of Boston, from 1635 to 1655, and the founder and first captain of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. He may well be concluded to have been on the Orthodox side in the Antinomian controversy; for it was to him, at his house, that all the disaffected were ordered to deliver up their arms. His volume contains notes of Mr. Cotton’s Expositions of the Gospels, and of several matters of discipline and debate before the church. He himself came under its censure, for making exorbitant profits on his goods, though he does not record it.



second day of the weeke we reached the first night to Mount Wollistone, where we were refreshed at our brother Savage's house, whereby we were comfortably fitted for our journey the next day, in which, by the good mercy of God and the help of your prayers, God did accompany us with seasonable weather. And in our journey, the first observable providence of God that presented itself to our view, and especially to my own observation, which was in providing for me a comfortable lodging that second night, which was the thing I most feared, because I never was used to lie without a bed. There was one that met us in the way that came from Cohannet, who had a house to himself, and he, of his own accord, did give us leave to lodge and abide in his house that night, where myself especially, and all of us, had comfortable lodging for that night, which was a great refreshing to us, and a deliverance from my fear.

“The next providence of God that fell out in our journey, was some manifestations of God's hand against us ; for being the fourth day to pass over a river in a canoe in which was eight of us, our canoe did hang upon a tree, to our very great danger, the water running swiftly away. Now my ignorance was such that I feared no danger, though those who had more skill saw

we were in imminent danger. Here our God delivered us.

“But now, we coming safe over the water, it pleased God to exercise us much in the loss of our brother Oliver, whose company we missed and did not perceive it, he falling into Mr. Luttall’s company, that was agoing the way to the Island; then they lost their way. And as our hearts were full of fear and care for our brother, so was his for us. The fear was increased on both sides, because there fell a great snow, and very hard weather upon it, and it was to our great rejoicing when we met one another again in health and safety, according to the good hand of our God, that was upon us in our journey; and they had been exposed to much danger in that cold season, for want of a fire, and all means to make it, had not the Lord beyond expectation provided for them, to bring forth a little powder through the shot of the piece. Now the fifth day we were to go over another river, where we were in great danger, our canoe falling upon a rock, which, had not some of our brethren, more skilful, stepped out off the rock, and put off the canoe, our danger had been very great. But God brought us safe at last on the sixth day, viz., the 28th day of the 12th month, to our great rejoicing.

“BROTHER OLIVER. Now for the success of

our journey to our brethren at the Island. We acquainted them with our purpose in coming, and desired that they would procure us a meeting that day ; but for reasons in their own breast, and because of the snow, they did not think meet then to give us a meeting ; but the next day they promised and did give us a meeting, Mr. Aspinwall, our brother Baulston, brother Sanfoard, and others ; and we delivered our message and the church's letter, which they read and gave us satisfactory answers. The next day we went to Portsmouth, where being entertained at our brother Cogshall's house, we desired them to procure us a meeting, to deliver our message and the church's letter. But when we expected a meeting, Mr. Cogshall sent us word, that by reason of a civil meeting, that was before appointed. But for a meeting, they did not know what power one church hath over another church, and they denied our commission, and refused to let our letter be read. And they conceive one church hath not power over the members of another church, and do not think they are tied to us by our covenant. And so were we fain to take all their answers by going to their several houses. Mr. Hutchinson told us he was more nearly tied to his wife than to the church ; he thought her to be a dear saint and servant of God.

“We came then to Mrs. Hutchinson, and told her that we had a message to do to her from the Lord, and from our church. She answered, ‘There are lords many and gods many, but I acknowledge but one Lord. Which Lord do you mean?’ We answered, ‘We came in the name of but one Lord, and that is God.’ ‘Then,’ saith she, ‘so far we agree; and where we do agree, let it be set down.’ Then we told her, ‘We had a message to her from the church of Christ in Boston.’ She replied, ‘She knew no church but one.’ We told her, ‘In Scripture, the Holy Ghost calls them churches.’ She said, ‘Christ had but one spouse.’ We told her, ‘He had in some sort as many spouses as saints.’ But for our church, she would not acknowledge it any church of Christ.

“MR. COTTON. Time being far spent, it will not be seasonable to speak much. We bless God with our brethren for their protection in their journey, asunder and together. We find they have faithfully and wisely discharged the trust and care put upon them.

“For the answers of our brethren at the Island, they are divers. As for those at Portsmouth, that they would not receive their message and commission, except they would present it to their church, which had been to have acknowledged them a lawful church, which they

had no commission to do; now these do wholly refuse to hear the church, or to hold any submission or subjection to the church; I would not expect any answer now, but that the church consider of it till the next day. Now consider, First, whether this be not a transgression of the rule in Matt. xviii. 'If they will not hear you, tell the church,' and so fall under the censure of the church. Secondly, they were in covenant with us as a wife to the husband, (1 Cor. vii. 15,) but like a harlot she walks home for all her covenant. Now if they will go, whether we be not discharged of our covenant with them, and so cut them off as no members; we shall consider with elders of other churches what is best to be done in such cases.

"Others do not refuse to hear the church, but answer as far as they can go; only some scruple the covenant, and others, other things, but do not reject the church, but do honor and esteem of us as churches of Christ. Now consider, whether it is not meet that we should first write to them, and labor to satisfy them, and to take off their grounds, and see if they may be reduced before we go to further proceedings with them. I would know how far the wives do consent or dissent from their husbands, or whether they be as resolute and obstinately peremptory as they.

“There is another sort, and that was of such as are excommunicate. Now we have gone as far with them as I think we can go, except they did show some pertinacy and obstinacy against Christ Jesus, and then the greater censure of anathema maranatha, that is for Mrs. Hutchinson. But such as start aside from church censure and rules out of ignorance, another course is to be taken with them, to reduce them again, if we can, as Mrs. Harding and Mrs. Dyer, who acknowledge the churches, and desire communion with us still. And for Mr. Aspinwall, he now being satisfied of the righteous and just proceedings of the church in casting out some of our members, and so refuseth to have any communion with them in the things of God.

“I pray consider of these things against the next Lord’s day, according to the distributions of the qualitie and nature of their offences; as those that are necessarily tied there for a home; as children to their parents, and wives to husbands, and others that stand out of obstinacy.

“I see the devil goes about to harden the hearts of brethren against church censures, and so to despise all church proceedings, and thereupon question church covenant, to shake all churches, and to question it altogether, or some parts of it, and how far it binds, and whether it be a part of the covenant of grace or no,

which I hope will be more and more cleared up."

We learn from the same record, which with painful faithfulness has chronicled the above, that the matter came again before the church in the month following.

"PASTOR. Brethren, you know the business of the Island hath been a long time propounded and taken by the church into consideration, and now we should draw to some issue and determination. You know the cases of them there do much differ; some are under admonition, and some under excommunication, and some have given satisfaction in part to the church, and do hold themselves still as members of the church, and do yet hearken to us and seek to give satisfaction. And others there be that do renounce the power of the church, and do refuse to hear the church, as Mr. Coddington, Mr. Dyer, and Mr. Cogshall. The two first have been questioned in the church, and dealt with, and are under admonition, and have been so long, yet this act of the church hath been so far from doing them any good, that they are rather grown worse under the same. For Mr. Coddington being dealt withall about hearing excommunicated persons prophesy, he was sensible of an evil in it, and said he had not before so well considered of it. Yet, since, he



hath not only heard such by accident, as before, but both himself, and our brother Dyer, and Mr. Cogshall, have gathered themselves into church fellowship, not regarding the covenant that they have made with this church, neither have taken our advice and consent herein, neither have they regarded it, but they have joined themselves in fellowship with some that are excommunicated, whereby they come to have a constant fellowship with them, and that in a church way, and when we sent the messengers of the church to them, to admonish them, and treat with them about such offences, they were so far from expressing any sorrow or giving any satisfaction, that they did altogether refuse to hear the church. And in this case the rule of Christ is plain. We know not how otherwise to proceed with such than by cutting them off from us; 'They that will not hear the church, let them be to you as a heathen and a publican.' Yet because we know not how far God may work relenting in any of their hearts, since the church messengers came from them, it is thought meet to forbear our proceeding a little longer against them, and patiently to wait awhile to see if yet they will endeavor to give satisfaction; if not, we shall take a seasonable time to proceed with them."

This conclusion, announced by the pastor to

the whole church, is to be received as the result of private conference among the elders, who usually considered such matters before making them public. These fresh and free reports, made at the time when feeling was warm and interest unabated, will convey to us better than any account of a later age, a fair representation of the manner in which the strife gradually subsided into harmless ecclesiastical gossip.

The same record transmits the following particulars concerning Francis Hutchinson, who, as will be remembered, had been admonished by the Boston church, because he would not vote for the admonition of his mother. The date is July 20th, 1640.

“Francis Hutchinson, living at the Island, or Portsmouth, with his father and mother, so that he cannot frequent the church, nor the church discharge her duty in watching over him, desired, by a letter to the church, that we would dismiss him to God and to the word of his grace, seeing he knew of no church there to be dismissed to.

“It was answered by our teacher, and consented to by the church, that there was no rule in Scripture for such a dismissal. We may recommend him to God, and may dismiss him to the word of his grace, when there is any such word there to dismiss him to, but

not till then, seeing the covenant of the church is an everlasting covenant, and no church hath power, when God hath added any member to the church and tied him, to release him, but to another church. And though we cannot perform all our duties to him so far off, yet some we may. Again, the church of Jerusalem had proselytes that lived at Rome, at Ethiopia, and in divers remote places, which could not come to Jerusalem, it may be not once a year; yet they do not discharge them of their covenant, though their journey was long, tedious, dangerous, and costly, to come so far to worship, or to offer a sacrifice to God in Jerusalem. But they came when they could, and that is accepted, and so may his be. Those that dwelt not in Jerusalem, God required that they should come to Jerusalem but three times a year, and if not so often, then once a year, and that at the Feast of Pentecost, which was the best time in the year to travel in. God requires no more at the hands of his people than he gives them ability to perform. If some of our members, in their journey to sea, should be taken by pirates, or carried to Algier, or should dwell in Constantinople, that doth not discharge him of his covenant, nor hath the church power to dismiss him, except to another church; but there he is to pray for the church,

and long after fellowship with it, and the church must even there take what care they can of them, by praying for them, by writing to them, and giving them counsel and instruction there, to stick to the grace of God, and to help them even with our purse, if need were."

This public expression of opinion by Mr. Cotton was made in consideration of a letter written by Francis Hutchinson, desiring dismissal from the church because of his necessary distance of abode, and his obligation to attend upon his parents. Mr. Cotton's formal reply, in the name of the Boston church, to this application, has been preserved, and its contents agree with the preceding report.\* The letter of Mr. Cotton is dated at Boston, August 12th, 1640, and is addressed "To our beloved brother, Francis Hutchinson, at Aquethnick." The allowance made in it by the elders, that they heard "a good report of his constancy in the truth and faith of the gospel," would imply that the son did not entirely accord with his mother. Reference is made in the epistle to a larger and fuller letter, which had been written to his parents by the church and to the whole company of wanderers from the fold, who were then at the Island.

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\* Hutchinson's papers, *Mass. Hist. Coll.* 2d Series, Vol. X. p. 184.

One more public rehearsal of the matter, as had before the church, out of many of the same character of which there is no record, is found in the same manuscript which has already served us. As this last review of the case probably made the substance of Mr. Cotton's letter, and as it gives us a few particulars of interest in the controversy, it is here put into print for the first time.

After the usual exercise by Mr. Cotton, on the 26th of September, 1640, the pastor, Mr. Wilson, as reported by a listener, said ;

“ You have heard this day what the estate of every man by nature is ; to wander and go astray from the fold of Christ, and to be carried away with every puff of vain doctrine. But such is the mercy of God to set up officers, to send out disciples, to set them up again. And Christ himself went a-fishing for souls, which puts us not out of hope. For you know, brethren, we have some stray souls that are gone from us, some out of ignorance, others out of pride and arrogance, and have forsaken the fold of Christ, and have stopped their ears against the counsel of Christ, to the grief of their brethren. For the church hath sent messengers to them, and such messages as might have won and persuaded them ; but they have stopped their ears, and

hardened their necks, and some made one excuse, and some another, to hinder their return to us. You know there hath been much patience and lenity used towards them, some under one censure, and some under another ; but because we know not what God may do, or who may be called from them, God hath put it again into the heart of our teacher to give an answer to such scruples and objections as they have made the causes of their hinderances from returning to us, that the whole church may be witnesses of our cares and endeavors to gain them and call them back, or, if they shall obstinately harden their necks, then to proceed to such further censures as the church shall be guided to. The writing is directed to them all that are not under the censure of the church."

Then follow the objections raised by the members who were under discipline, with the several answers to them. The first three of these objections are, that the church had first broken its covenant with the exiles ; that the covenant binds no longer than a member remains with the church ; that parents and wives being cast out of the church, necessity is laid upon others to go with them, to supply their wants.

The fourth objection, with what follows, is interesting.

“ *Objection 4.* But the Court hath censured us, and drove us out of the country, and Mr. Winthrop advised us to depart.

“ *Answer.* Mr. Winthrop affirms his advice was not as Governor, nor as the mouth of the Court, but only in Christian love, to depart for a time, till they could give the Court satisfaction. He answers, he did not advise all to depart, for he persuaded Mr. Coddington earnestly to stay, and did undertake to make his peace with the Court. Neither did the Court banish or drive any away but two, Mr. Aspinwall and Mrs. Hutchinson. Some were under no offence at all with the Court, as our brother Hazard.

“ *Objection 5.* Persecution dissipateth the church, and so it hath done us.

“ *Answer.* Persecution doth not always dissipate and dissolve churches, but scatters them, though the covenant cannot be dissolved. But the church in Boston is not dissipated, and therefore you are not loosed from the covenant of the church.

“ *Objection 6.* All the saints in the world make but one church, and therefore there is but one covenant.

“ *Answer.* All the saints do make up more than one visible, particular church. If all saints made but one church, then the officers of one church had power over another, and then how



can the church meet all together in one place, as the apostle speaks?

“ *Objection 7.* Saith one, I am freed from the covenant of the church, because of the church’s breach of covenant first, in that some of the church had a hand in our brother Wheelwright’s censure and banishment, and the church hath not dealt with those members for it.

“ *Answer 1.* If the church should break covenant with you, yet that doth not loose the covenant between the church and you.

“ *Answer 2.* Though some of the members of the church had a hand in his censure and banishment, yet it follows not that the church should deal with them, when he suffered justly for his errors, and his misapplying of his doctrine to raise up much trouble and commotion, to the great distraction both of church and commonwealth. Therefore, we cannot yet see that the church hath violated their covenant with you, or dissolved your covenant with us. Therefore, brethren, do not walk like lambs in a large place, but return, that we may watch over you; for we seek not yours, but you, and your good and peace.

“If these letters be such as your hearts go along with, and if the church consent, we should send the name of the church for the recalling of some of them. If you be silent, we shall take

your silence for consent ; if you consent not, you have liberty to express yourselves.

“BROTHER BUTTON. I would express my thoughts. I being at the Island this week, they expressed themselves to me, that if we do send to them in a church way, they would not hear us. Therefore, I think the best way were to send private messengers to deal with them first.

“PASTOR. That hath been done already ; and therefore, if they will not hear the church, it is plain that the church should take some other course with them. Let them be to the church as heathens.

“BROTHER HUTCHINSON. I desire to express myself, though I am loath to differ from my brethren. Yet I would not have my silence wrap up my consent with the consent of the brethren, seeing the letters seem to be a justification of all proceedings. As I would not condemn the church or commonwealth, so I would not justify all that is done.

“PASTOR. You lay yourself open to the suspicion of your brethren. Therefore, either you should have been silent, or express the reasons of your dissent. If you do not justify the proceedings of church and commonwealth, you cast reproach upon them, and censure them, which you ought not to do, for both church and commonwealth dealt justly in casting out your mother.

“MR. HUTCHINSON. I desire to speak to no particulars, only I cannot approve or consent to all that hath been done.”

While Mrs. Hutchinson was at Rhode Island, one of her daughters was married to a young minister named Collins. He had been persecuted for non-conformity at St. Christopher's or Barbadoes, where he had exercised his ministry, and came to New Haven in the summer of 1640. He taught a school, for a time, at Hartford, and was much esteemed for piety there, as he had been at Gloucester, in England.\* When he heard of Mrs. Hutchinson's opinions, he was troubled by them, and went to Newport to learn more of them. Here he became so warmly attached to her and her family, as to become her son-in-law. Espousing her cause with warmth, he wrote a letter to some one in Boston, in which, according to Governor Winthrop, “he charged all our churches and ministers to be anti-Christian, and many other reproachful speeches, terming our king, King of Babylon, and sought to possess the people's hearts with evil thoughts of our government and of our churches.”

Collins and Francis Hutchinson made a visit to Boston in the summer of 1641, and were im-

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\* Hubbard, p. 341.

mediately and forcibly brought before the Governor, and council, and elders, the former to answer for his letter, and the latter for calling the church in Boston "a strumpet." They were imprisoned until Collins should pay a fine of one hundred pounds, and his companion a fine of fifty pounds. This, however, was rather an unprofitable measure. Winthrop says, "We assessed the fines the higher, partly that by occasion thereof they might be the longer kept in from doing harm, (for they were kept close prisoners,) and also because that family had put the country to so much charge in the Synod, and other occasions, to the value of five hundred pounds, at least. But after, because the winter drew on, and the prison was inconvenient, we abated them to forty pounds and twenty pounds. But they seemed not willing to pay any thing. They refused to come to the church assemblies except they were led, and so they came duly. At last, we took their own bonds for their fine, and so dismissed them." They were forbidden, on their release, to return to the jurisdiction, under pain of death. Nevertheless, they found some sympathy in the church; and even the constable who had the charge of them was fined for his favor to them.\*

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\* Winthrop, Vol. II. pp. 38-40, and Court Records.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Mrs. Hutchinson at the Island. — Death of her Husband. — She removes with her Family to the Dutch. — Their Massacre by the Indians. — Effect of the News in Boston. — Restoration of Harmony. — Governor Winthrop. — Mr. Coddington remains at the Island. — Mr. Aspinwall recants, and returns to Boston. — Mr. Wheelwright apologizes, and is released from his Banishment. — His subsequent Course. — Report of the Controversy in England. — Mr. Cotton reproached. — His Disclaimer. — Review of Mrs. Hutchinson's Course and Opinions. — Her Descendants.*

THE last years of Mrs. Hutchinson's life were clouded with many trials, and it closed at last in a dreadful tragedy. The treatment of her son and her son-in-law, in Boston, proved to her that the ill feeling against her increased rather than diminished, and she continued to be annoyed with messages, ostensibly designed to bring her into submission to the church, which had cast her out from its fold. As far as was possible, she and her friends maintained amongst them religious institutions, and she continued to exercise her gifts. The freedom of

speech and opinion, allowed in the new colony, could not fail to be abused by fanatics and disorganizers, and there was enough in her own views to let in many wild and dangerous fancies. The natural circumstances attending the settlement of the Island, under a questionable Indian deed, and by a voluntary compact, designed to give as small a compass as possible to the civil law, and no restraint whatever to the profession and practice of religion; these circumstances, and others which will suggest themselves, were not, it must be confessed, remarkably favorable to the happiness of the exiles from Massachusetts. As far as concerned the obtaining of the means necessary for the support of life, these were procured as the reward of labor, at the Island, at least as securely and abundantly as in the Bay colony.

Mr. Hutchinson died in 1642. The fact, that he shared the fortune of his wife through all her trials, is certainly no feeble evidence of her private virtues, and of her faithfulness in all her domestic relations. From all the records which have come down to us, and in all the proceedings against her, there is no intimation of any alienation, or opposition, on his part, to her views. He certainly does not appear to have taken a public stand in her defence, nor even to have offered any protest to the civil

and ecclesiastical dealing with her. This, however, he may nevertheless have done. But he never deserted her; he never, so far as we know, felt any thing but entire approval of her whole course. We have before seen, that to the messengers from the church at Boston he professed an undiminished attachment to her, and esteemed her as a "dear saint and servant of God." We know not the precise date or circumstances of his death, nor can we find any particulars of especial interest in his life. Doubtless, as in his last days at the Island he reviewed his pilgrimage, it must have seemed strange to him to find himself and his family cut off from fellowship with the companions of his youth, who, though still living with him on a foreign shore, which they had sought together for freedom of faith, had been divided by a wider barrier than the ocean. We do not know that he ever complained of his lot. Perhaps it was not to him so great a hardship as to us it appears.

Soon after her husband's death, Mrs. Hutchinson, with all her surviving family, except a daughter, the wife of Thomas Savage, and a son, Edward Hutchinson, who remained at Boston, removed from Rhode Island to the neighborhood of the Dutch. The cause of her removal does not appear. Mr. Welde indeed



shows his own ignorance of the true cause, by the alternative in which he implies some odious cause, when he says, "Mrs. Hutchinson, being weary of the Island, or rather, the Island being weary of her, departed from thence with all her family." The probable reason which influenced her, was one which we know induced others about that time to go to Long Island and the Dutch settlements. Massachusetts was meditating an encroachment upon the people at Rhode Island, through the alleged submission of some Indian chiefs to its authority, and the expressed desire of some of the refugees from the Bay again to put themselves under the protection of its laws. There was really ground for apprehending that the Island would, by a most unlawful extension of rights restricted by the patent, be brought under the rigid control of Massachusetts. Wishing to be secure from that probability, many persons left the Island. Mrs. Hutchinson may have been influenced by the same motive to remove. She likewise might wish a more quiet and peaceable abode, where she might enjoy her peculiar religious views without any molestation or debate.

It is also doubtful to what precise spot she removed. Some statements affirm that it was on the mainland between New Haven and New York, that she found a settlement; other ac-

counts represent her as going to Long Island, very near to Hell Gate. The Indians of the main and of the Island were then in open hostility with the Dutch; and in the summer of 1643, after a battle between the Mohegans and Narragansetts, fifteen Dutchmen had been slain. It is altogether probable that Mrs. Hutchinson and her family, with some more of the English, were then settled upon the mainland, and scattered over a space of a mile in the territory claimed by the Dutch. They might have been supposed to be Dutch by a party of Indians, who, thirsting for blood and booty, fell upon their settlement in August, 1643. Mrs. Hutchinson, Mr. Collins and his wife, with all the rest of the family, save one child, who was carried into captivity, perished, as well as such members of two other families as were in their houses at the time of the attack. The whole number of persons thus slaughtered, without provocation or cause, was sixteen. Report indeed affirms, that the victims were confined to their dwellings and burned, as were their cattle.\* Such, amid an accumulation of horrors, was the close of the career of Mrs. Hutchinson. With the piercing yell of the Indians in her ear, with her children

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\* Winthrop, Vol. II. p. 136; and Hutchinson's *Hist. of Mass.* Vol. I. p. 72.

and grandchildren writhing in agonies before her eyes, her troubled, and yet not unhappy life, was ended. Many persons, men, women, and children, suffered by a like tragic fate in the perils attending the early settlement of all our colonies. Of the greater part of these, as well as of Mrs. Hutchinson, we must say, that they died without any of their kindred or race to soothe their pangs, without any fellow-believer to bear witness to their Christian constancy, and with none but barbarian hands to give them burial, even if this last service, which very seldom was the case, was granted.

Such a fate shocks us, when it is encountered by the robust pioneer of the forest; it is dismal and distressing, when a family upon a border settlement is sacrificed to it at a time of open and mutual hostilities between the red and the white men. But every feature of horror, which such a fate ever wears, seems to invest this destruction in cold blood of a whole household, no one of which had probably ever wronged an Indian, and who were seeking in a wilderness peace in their religious faith, and the hard comfort of sympathy among themselves when it was denied them everywhere else.

It was in but too faithful accordance with the whole treatment which Mrs. Hutchinson had received in Massachusetts, that when the shock-

ing tidings of her destruction reached Boston, through Connecticut, the grim and ungenial faith of the Puritans should discern in it an especial token of an angry providence. She, who had entertained a proud notion, had first been given over to strange delusions, and had dared to boast of revelations. When she added contumacy against magistrates and elders to heresy, she had been cursed in the fruit of her womb. Still she was made the subject of especial prayer, and of covenanted council, as the last means which could reclaim her, and, despising these, God's fury fell upon her. So reasoned and preached some divines of that day, doubtless with a sincerity equal to her own, but certainly with no less of obstinacy or voluntary blindness than she herself had manifested.

Probably, however, the death of Mrs. Hutchinson contributed much towards the complete restoration of peace to the community, which had been so sorely shaken with contention. So long as her influence was exerted, however indirectly, the feud would have remained open, and the profession of her opinions would have been freely made in the church at Boston. A great change had indeed taken place there by force of the circumstances which have been already detailed. Governor Winthrop records, in the fall of 1639, the evidences of this change.

He says, that the pastor and himself had sorely experienced the alienation from them of the affections of the large majority of the church, and had suffered many slights; but having borne all patiently, "and not withdrawing themselves as they were strongly solicited to have done, but carrying themselves lovingly and helpfully upon all occasions," the hearts of the people had been won back to them, and the church had been saved from threatening ruin beyond all expectation. The church, indeed, gave a strong and a valuable proof of their undiminished confidence in Winthrop, by sending to him a present of two hundred pounds, as an expression of their regard, and as a supply for some straits to which he had been reduced by the unfaithfulness of his steward.\* The character of this honored and upright Governor was sorely tried in the controversy, upon which his firm and well considered views compelled him to take a decided stand. An honest purpose appears in all his words and advice; and though he was probably the most determined, he was doubtless also the mildest upon his side.

William Coddington was the most eminent and influential of Mrs. Hutchinson's supporters. While in England, in 1629, he had been

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\* Winthrop, Vol. I. p. 323.

chosen a magistrate or assistant of the intended colony of Massachusetts Bay, and was several times re-chosen here to that high office, besides being treasurer of the colony. In leaving Massachusetts, he had more to lose than any one else, as he was a principal merchant in Boston, and owned a large property with improvements at Braintree, and would have been, doubtless, Governor of the colony. But, entering his protest to the proceedings against Mrs. Hutchinson, "that his dissent might appear to succeeding times," he undertook a new exile. He was for years the judge, or chief ruler, of the Island, and died as Governor of the colony under the charter, having never recanted his sentiments, nor made atonement to Massachusetts.

William Aspinwall, who, as a deacon of the church, and a representative of Boston, had personally carried a weight of influence to Mrs. Hutchinson's party, became the first secretary of the colony at the Island, but showed some symptoms of regret at his course soon after settling there. In consequence of an application which he made to the General Court to have his sentence of banishment removed, that he might make proper atonement, he was permitted to come to Boston. On the 27th of March, 1642, he tendered his submission, and was reconciled to the church. "He made," says Winthrop,



“a very free and full acknowledgment of his error and seducement, and that with much detestation of his sin.” He did the same before the magistrates, and by the next General Court was reinstated.\* But he seems afterwards to have given himself up to the belief of a wilder notion than any which he renounced, as his name appears to a small tract advocating the delusion of the Fifth Monarchy, or “King Jesus” party.†

It is pleasant to record that the most respectful and amicable relations were restored between Mr. Wheelwright and his brethren in the Bay. He had been earnestly solicited to accompany his fellow-sufferers to Rhode Island, because the soil and the people were far richer than those of his settlement, but he refused, as Mr. Cotton says, because he thought their judgment corrupt; “professing often, whilst they pleaded for the Covenant of Grace, they took away the Grace of the Covenant.”‡ As has been already stated, he went, on his banishment,

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\* Winthrop, Vol. II. p. 62.

† “A brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy, or Kingdom that shortly is to come into the World, the Monarch, Subjects, Officers and Laws thereof, and the Surpassing Glory, Amplitude, Unity and Peace of that Kingdom, &c., by William Aspinwall, N. E.” London, 1653.

‡ Cotton’s Answer to Baylie, in “The Way of Congregational Churches cleared,” &c. London, 1648, p. 61.



to Exeter, and there formed a church, of which he was the first pastor. Trouble arising between that settlement and Massachusetts, as to the power of jurisdiction, he removed, in 1642, to the town of Wells, near Cape Porpoise, and became the pastor of a church there. Feeling unwilling to prolong the hostile relation in which he now stood, as under censure, with his brethren, he made the first motion towards reinstating himself in their good affections. He wrote a letter to Governor Winthrop, in 1643, asking, through him, permission of the Court to visit Boston on especial business, and was readily allowed a visit of fourteen days. He availed himself of the opportunity to confer with several of the elders, and he gave them such satisfaction, that they intended to seek a release of his sentence.

In September, 1644, Mr. Wheelwright wrote to the Governor, for the Court, what must be allowed to have been a most submissive and penitent letter. He says, that after long and mature consideration, he has discovered, that the main point of difference in the controversy about justification, and the evidence of it, "is not of that nature and consequence as was then presented to me in the false glass of Satan's temptations and mine own distempered passions, which makes me unfeignedly sorry that I had

such a hand in those sharp and vehement contentions raised thereabouts, to the great disturbance of the churches of Christ." He adds an expression of regret for his censoriousness in the application of his sermon, and for the countenance which he gave to persons of corrupt judgment; "and that, in the Synod, I used such unsafe and obscure expressions, falling from me as a man dazzled with the buffetings of Satan, and that I did appeal, from misapprehension of things." He professed his readiness to give satisfaction, if he could be convinced, by Scripture light, that he had in anything walked contrary to rule.

This writing was dated at Wells, September 10th, 1643, most probably after the death of Mrs. Hutchinson was known to her brother. The Court was pleased with his submission, and granted him safe conduct to come to Boston and clear himself. The Governor, informing him of this result, received another letter for the Court from Mr. Wheelwright. In this second communication, some qualifications and explanations are presented, which we should expect to find, and the absence of which astonishes us as we read the first letter. He now says, that he should expect an opportunity in Court to "explain my true intent and meaning more fully to this effect; that, notwithstanding my failings, for

which I humbly crave pardon, yet I cannot, with a good conscience, condemn myself for such capital crimes, dangerous revelations, and gross errors, as have been charged upon me, the concurrence of which, as I take it, make up the very substance of the cause of all my sufferings. I do not see but, in so mixed a cause, I am bound to use, may it be permitted, my just defence so far as I apprehend myself to be innocent, as to make my confession where I am convinced of any delinquency." His banishment was finally released by the Court, without his personal appearance, or any further self-humiliation; and, if there were any informality in the legal process which cleared him, the present leniency of the Court was but a suitable apology for its former severity.\*

Mr. Wheelwright removed to Hampton in 1647, and afterwards went to England, where he was intimate with Oliver Cromwell. Here he remained until after the Restoration, when he returned, and settled in Salisbury, where he died in 1679, being advanced in years, and the oldest minister in the colony. He had felt deeply grieved at the imputations cast upon him by Mr. Welde and Mr. Rutherford, and he pub-

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\* Mr. Wheelwright's Letters are given by Winthrop, Vol. II. pp. 162-164.

lished a vindication of himself against their charges. He therein quotes these words of Mr. Cotton; "I do conceive and profess, that our brother Wheelwright's doctrine is according to God in the points controverted;" and he also alleges a declaration of the General Court, signed by the secretary on the 24th of August, 1654, at the request of his church at Hampton, affirming that he had, for several years, approved himself a sound, orthodox, and profitable minister.\* A short tract, published in London in 1645, bears the name of John Wheelwright, Junior, and is professedly an answer to Mr. Welde's tract. I cannot think that Mr. Wheelwright wrote this, though it flatly denies many of the statements of the Roxbury minister. In this tract, the following reference to Mrs. Hutchinson probably comes nearer to being a fair account of her, than is to be found in any contemporary document. "In spirituals, indeed, she gave her understanding over into the power of suggestion and immediate dictates, by reason of which she had many strange fancies, and erroneous tenents possessed her. For a pretended revelation of the destruction of the Court, she was expelled the Bay of Massachusetts."†

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\* Mather's *Magnalia*, Book VII. Chap. iii. § 3.

† "Mercurius Americanus; Mr. Welde his Antitype; or, Massachusetts Great Apologist examined. Being Observa-

Report of all the proceedings connected with the heresies of Mrs. Hutchinson, and of the distractions which had torn the colony, was carried to Europe, and widely circulated there. While friends were grieved and alarmed, foes aggravated and published the story of what had occurred in New England. The name of Mr. Cotton was freely used in all these accounts, and, as before hinted, not at all to his credit. Indeed, he barely escaped public censure from the Court. During the trial of Mrs. Hutchinson, Deputy-Governor Dudley made some hard allusions to his influence, and Hugh Peters seemed ready to put him under the same indictment with her. The powerful protection of Winthrop was his security. His sermon on a Fast day, kept by his church on account of its recent troubles, has already been referred to, as containing a sort of confession of a degree of delusion on his part. The temporary cloud which gathered over his fair fame was afterwards dispelled; he fulfilled his long ministry with renown, and died in the odor of sanctity.

But Mr. Cotton, for many years after the heat of the strife had subsided, complained of certain

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tions upon a Paper styled 'A Short Story,' &c. Wherein some Parties therein concerned are vindicated, and the Truth generally cleared. By John Wheelwright, Junior. London, 1645."

private letters and ungrounded reports, which had cast severe reflections upon him, and brought him under unmerited reproach in England. The representations of his course, which were thus current, were eagerly seized by the then famous Robert Baylie, who, in his zeal for Presbyterianism, wished to cast all possible discredit upon Independency, by showing its evil fruits every where. Mr. Cotton, as the most renowned of the pastors and teachers of New England, the churches of which stood on the Independent platform, would naturally be a prominent mark for Mr. Baylie, who devoted several pages of a treatise on the errors of the times to New England Independency. With a qualified admission of Mr. Cotton's gifts, and a reflection upon him for having been so long an Episcopal preacher in England, this writer charges him with a dangerous and horrible fall into Antinomianism and Familism, and with having been the principal patron of Mrs. Hutchinson and her followers.\*

To each sentence and specification of these charges Mr. Cotton replied with candor and calmness. He gives high praise to Mrs. Hutch-

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\* "A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time," &c By Robert Baylie, pp. 53-74.

inson for the qualities and services by which she was first known in Boston, and says that, for a long time, even after unfavorable accounts were circulated concerning her, and the ministers had taken her in hand, he could discover no heresy in her, and therefore had no reason to withdraw his esteem from her. He had sent some sisters of the church, in whom he had confidence, to her meetings, but, when such listened for the purpose, no exceptionable remarks could be heard from her. He says, that even when he esteemed her most highly, he had censured her with faithfulness for three spiritual failings, namely ; that her faith was not begotten, nor much strengthened, by public ministrations, but by private meditations, or revelations ; that she had a clear discernment of her justification, but little or none of her sanctification ; and “ that she was more sharply censorious of other men’s spiritual estates and hearts, than the servants of God are wont to be, who are more taken up with judging of themselves before the Lord, than of others.” Mr. Cotton then alludes to the manner in which he had been deceived, and the misuse which, as afterwards appeared, had been made of his name, by the followers of Mrs. Hutchinson, who professed one thing to him, and another to others, and pre-



tended to agree fully with his doctrine in his public discourses, and not to go beyond it. He allows that, in one point discussed before the Synod, he was proved to be in error by the ministers. But to Mr. Baylie's assertion, that he intended to leave the New England churches with Mrs. Hutchinson, on account of his Antinomian opinion of them, as legal synagogues, he indignantly replies that he had no such intention. The ground of this charge was a purpose which he had cherished, in answer to a request from sixty persons, to remove with them to New Haven for the sake of peace. He had likewise disapproved of the alien law passed by the Court, because, he says, "I saw by this means we should receive no more members into our church, but such as must profess themselves of a contrary judgment to what I believed to be the truth." He plainly and unqualifiedly affirms, that Mrs. Hutchinson was guilty of falsehood in denying her opinions, and was for that cast out of the church, in which punishment he fully accorded.\*

The same view of the whole controversy, and of his own position and course in it, is given by Mr. Cotton in his "Answer to Master Roger

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\* Cotton's *Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared*, pp. 38-66.

Williams.”\* The simple truth is, that Mr. Cotton was himself a sincere and earnest believer in the principal tenet which was first identified with the teachings of Mrs. Hutchinson. He himself preached, that there was an inward and all-essential witness within the breast of every one who was in an accepted state before God, and that this witness should be listened to and regarded more than professions, gifts, and graces. This tenet appears in many of his writings. He could do no less than be faithful to it, and to those who honored it.

The preceding pages are believed to contain all that is necessary to enable a reader, who has an interest in the matter, to form an opinion of the character, views, and course, of Mrs. Hutchinson, and of the controversy to which she gave birth in New England. The writer would feel, that he had most unfairly presented this portion of ecclesiastical and civil history, and had conveyed an impression contrary to his own convictions, if it should be inferred from this narrative that Mrs. Hutchinson was an amiable and inoffensive woman, a sage in wisdom, a saint in piety, the teacher and witness of a

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\* “The Bloody Tenent Washed, &c. Whereunto is added a Reply to Mr. Williams’s Answer to Mr. Cotton’s Letter.” By John Cotton. London, 1647, p. 50.

perfectly sound theological tenet, and a martyr to a patient and faithful testimony to the truth. The writer has not intended to represent her as entitled to either epithet, for he does not believe that she fulfilled all the conditions for deserving either epithet. His aim has been to write, with strict fidelity to truth, an interesting page in the early annals of New England, and, as far as Mrs. Hutchinson is involved in the distracting and melancholy tale which it tells, to state her opinions fairly, to record how they were developed, received, and abused, and to imply the wrong which she did to others, and the wrong which others did to her.

The faithful expostulation which Mr. Cotton says he had with her, even in her days of general esteem, was evidently addressed to her three great failings and weaknesses, her spiritual pride, her contempt of public ordinances, and her censorious tongue. She was puffed up by her intuitions and self-assurance; she thought no ministrations of religious counsel could be equal in value to her own; and she was guilty of offensive personalities. All these failings too were aggravated by her sex, which, in proportion as it is honored above that of men for its patient and quiet virtues, is visited with uncourteous and unscrupulous opposition when, even in a good cause, it trenches upon the province of masculine influ-

ence. The ministers were her most jealous, most determined, and perhaps, for the time, her most proper opponents. Devout and helpful females have always, in Protestant communions at least, been objects of mingled gratitude and anxiety to the ministers of the churches in which they have been noted personages. In general, those different feelings are decided in each case by the manner in which the zeal of the female heart is manifested; whether by offices of tenderness and mercy to the afflicted, or chiefly by the tongue. Mrs. Hutchinson labored in both ways, and received, as we have seen, due regard, till the prominence in her teachings of one tenet, which is really liable to dangerous abuse, raised against her the cry of heresy, formed a new party, and embittered the parties already existing, roused all bad passions, and led to the result which will always close a religious controversy when the civil power is at the service of either side in it.

But allowing all just exceptions against Mrs. Hutchinson their full measure and weight, she was still a high-minded and excellent woman. Her religious experience had been troubled and deep, and from it she had won a faith, which, for its power and value, was more to her than any thing the earth could offer. She sought to do good by winning others to share it. She

performed the duties which it required of her devotedly, and bore the sufferings which it brought upon her submissively. In the fervency of her devotion she was equal with Madame Bourignon and Madame Guion; she taught a safer system than Ann Lee, and ventured not upon the dangerous reforms of Mary Wolstonecraft. Any other person, however exalted in character, who had taught the same tenets, would have received at that time equally harsh treatment with herself. She appears to have been a faithful wife and mother, and for aught that can now be discovered, she was a Christian in heart and life. The only stain cast upon her character, even by her enemies, is in the imputation of falsehood before the church. We can well understand how she may have been entirely innocent of this charge, while at the same time, even Mr. Cotton might have thought her guilty of it. Her experience and fate combine with many other lessons, which have been enforced upon Christendom by dismal and sorrowful testimonies, to teach the wiser way of treating religious dissensions, and to suggest that perhaps the wisest method of all is that proposed by Solomon, "Leave off contention before it be meddled with."

Thomas Savage, son-in-law of Mrs. Hutchinson, and one of the disarmed, did his part

towards reconciliation, when, on the death of his wife, in 1652, he married a daughter of the Reverend Zachariah Symmes, one of the most zealous opposers of Antinomianism. He was Commander-in-chief of the Massachusetts forces at the opening of King Philip's war, and was a member of the council from 1680, till he died, on the 14th of February, 1682.

Edward Hutchinson, who remained in Boston when his mother was banished, was a captain, and died in consequence of a wound received in Quaboag fight, in King Philip's war. His descendants filled places of trust and honor, and his great-grandson, Thomas Hutchinson, was Governor and historian of Massachusetts. This distinguished, but unfortunate magistrate, in his brief reference to the controversy with his ancestress, seems so anxious to avoid partiality, that he has perhaps allowed himself to attach to her more of censure than appears necessary or deserved.

## APPENDIX.

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*Remonstrance or Petition addressed to the General Court of Massachusetts, in March, 1637, and acted upon, by another Court, in November following.*

As so much importance, in the controversy with Mrs. Hutchinson, was attached to this document, it is here printed, with the names subscribed to it, that the reader may judge for himself as to its character.

“We, whose names are underwritten, have diligently observed this honoured Court’s proceedings against our deare and reverend brother in Christ, Mr. Wheelwright, now under censure of the Court, for the truth of Christ; wee do humbly beseech this honourable Court to accept this Remonstrance and Petition of ours, in all due submission tendered to your Worships.

“For, first, whereas our beloved brother, Mr. Wheelwright, is censured for contempt, by the greater part of this honoured Court, we desire your Worships to consider the sincere intention of our Brother to promote your end in the day of Fast, for whereas we do perceive your principal intention the day of Fast looked chiefly at the public peace of the Churches, our Reverend brother did to his best



strength, and as the Lord assisted him, labor to promote your end, and therefore indeavoured to draw us neerer unto Christ, the head of our union, that so wee might bee established in peace, which wee conceive to bee the true way, sanctified of God, to obtaine your end, and therefore deserves no such censure as wee conceive.

“Secondly, Whereas our deare Brother is censured of sedition; wee beseech your Worships to consider, that either the person condemned must bee culpable of some seditious fact, or his doctrine must bee seditious, or must breed sedition in the hearts of his hearers, or else wee know not upon what grounds hee should bee censured. Now to the first, wee have not heard any that have witnessed against our brother for any seditious fact. Secondly, neither was the doctrine itselfe, being no other but the very expressions of the Holy Ghost himselfe, and therefore cannot justly bee branded with sedition. Thirdly, if you look at the effects of his Doctrine upon the hearers, it hath not stirred up sedition in us, not so much as by accident; wee have not drawn the sword, as sometimes Peter did, rashly, neither have wee rescued our innocent Brother, as sometimes the Israelites did Jonathan, and yet they did not seditiously. The Covenant of free Grace held forth by our Brother, hath taught us rather to become humble suppliants to your Worships, and if wee should not prevaile, wee would rather with patience give our cheekes to the smiters. Since therefore the Teacher, the Doctrine, and the hearers be most free from sedition, (as we conceive) wee humbly beseech you

in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, your Judge and ours, and for the honour of this Court and the proceedings thereof, that you will bee pleased either to make it appeare to us, and to all the world, to whome the knowledge of all these things will come, wherein the sedition lies, or else acquit our Brother of such a censure.

“Further, wee beseech you remember the old method of Satan, the ancient enemy of Free Grace, in all ages of the Churches, who hath raised up such calumnies against the faithful Prophets of God. Eliab was called the troubler of Israel, 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18. Amos was charged for conspiracy, Amos vii. 10. Paul was counted a pestilent fellow, or moover of sedition, and a ring-leader of a sect, Acts xxiv. 5, and Christ, himselfe, as well as Paul, was charged to bee a Teacher of New Doctrine, Mark i. 27, Acts xvii. 19. Now wee beseech you consider, whether that old serpent work not after his old method, even in our daies.

“Further, wee beseech you consider the danger of meddling against the Prophets of God, Psalm cv. 14, 15, for what yee do unto them, the Lord Jesus takes as done unto himselfe. If you hurt any of his members, the head is very sensible of it; for so saith the Lord of Hosts, Hee that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye, Zach. ii. 8. And better a mill-stone were hanged about our necks and that wee were cast into the sea, than that wee should offend any one of these little ones, which believe on Him, Matthew xviii. 6.

“And lastly, we beseech you consider, how you

should stand in relation to us, as nursing Fathers, which gives us encouragement to promote our humble requests to you, or else wee would say with the Prophet, Isaiah xxii. 4, Look from mee that I may weep bitterly, Labor not to comfort mee, &c.; or as Jere. ix. 2, O that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of a wayfaring man. And thus have wee made known our griefes and desires to your Worships, and leave them upon record with the Lord, and with you, knowing that if wee should receive repulse from you, with the Lord wee shall find grace."

The names of the signers or approvers of this remonstrance, being of course those who for this act were disarmed by order of the Court, are thus given upon the record. (Colony Records, Vol. I. p. 208.)

The following were of Boston. Captain John Underhill, Mr. Thomas Oliver, William Hutchinson, William Aspinwall, Samuel Cole, William Dyer, Edward Rainsford, John Button, John Sanfoard, Richard Cooke, Richard Fairbanks, Thomas Marshall, Oliver Mellows, Samuel Wilbore, John Oliver, Hugh Gunnison, John Biggs, Richard Gridley, Edward Bates, William Dinely, William Litherland, Matthew Iyans, Henry Elkins, Zaccheus Bosworth, Robert Rice, William Townsend, Robert Hull, William Pell, Richard Hutchinson, James Johnson, Thomas Savage, John Davy, George Burden, John Odlin, Gamaliel Wayte, Edward Hutchinson, William Wilson, Isaack Grosse, Richard Carder, Robert Hardings, Richard Wayte, John Porter, Jacob Eliot, James Penniman, Thomas Wardell, William Wardell,

Thomas Matson, William Baulston, John Compton, Mr. Parker, William Freeborn, Henry Bull, John Walker, William Salter, Edward Bendall, Thomas Wheeler, Mr. Clarke, Mr. John Coggeshall.

Of Salem, were Mr. Scrugs, Mr. Alfoot, Mr. Commins, goodman Robert Moulton, goodman King.

Of Newbury, were Mr. Dummer, Mr. Easton, Mr. Spencer.

Of Roxbury, were Mr. Edward Denison, Richard Morris, Richard Bulgar, William Denison, and Philip Sherman.

Of Ipswich, were Mr. Foster, and Samuel Sherman.

Of Charlestown, were Mr. George Bunker, and James Browne.

Besides the above names, the remonstrance must have been subscribed by the following persons, whose names are mentioned on the records as at once erased from the offensive document on acknowledgment of their sin in subscribing it. They of course escaped from being disarmed. William Larnet, Ralph Mousall, Ezekiel Richardson, Richard Sprague, Edward Carling, Thomas Ewar, Benj. Hubbard, William Baker, Edward Mellows, and William Frothingham.

But even with these additional names, we have not all the adherents of Mrs. Hutchinson and her brother. Mr. Philemon Pormont, the first schoolmaster of Boston, accompanied Mr. Wheelwright to Exeter, in 1638. The Rev. Daniel Maude, who was also a schoolmaster, and who, with Mr. Pormont, is to be considered as leading a list of distinguished and able men as masters of the public Latin School in Boston, may be supposed to have been infected with the

heresy. He was settled as minister of the church in Dover, N. H., in 1642.

Consulting our ancient records, with all these names before us, we can form a fair estimate of the strength of Mrs. Hutchinson's party in Boston, and of the character of her adherents. The writer had intended to subjoin, in this place, a brief mention of each of her adherents, that a single line of comment upon each name might express how strong and general had been her influence. Such comments, however, would only show at length what may be summarily stated in a sentence; namely, that men of all ranks and stations, beginning with those whose names bear the prefix of gentlemen, and ending with the humblest artisans and day-laborers, embraced her opinions and suffered for them. Many persons now living will find their ancestors upon the list.

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It has been mentioned in the preceding narrative, on the authority of Mr. Welde, that Mrs. Hutchinson was the daughter of a minister, Mr. Marbury. I can find no notice of this gentleman in any of the biographical or historical works of his time. On a fly leaf to a printed Tract, by Mr. Cotton, is a list of "Bookes printed for George Calvert," in London, and on this list is "An Exposition on the Prophetie of Obadia, by Edward Marbury, Minister of the Gospel in London." This Exposition is mentioned by Rosenmüller, in his Prolegomena to that Book of Scripture, and the date affixed is 1639. The expositor was doubtless the father of Mrs. Hutchinson. 5











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